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Allegiances

[image]

~•ThunderClan•~

Leader: Acornstar, a brown-red tom with green eyes.

Deputy: Brushfeather, a pale brown tabby tom.

Medicine Cat: Cherryfur, a place ginger she-cat with a completely white tail.

Warriors:

Rivertail, a flowy gray-blue she-cat with sparkling blue eyes.
Apprentice: Amberpaw.

Stoneskip, a solid gray tom with green eyes.
Apprentice: Emberpaw.

Swiftbreeze, a white she-cat, with blue eyes.
Apprentice: Flamepaw.

Featherdust, a pale brown she-cat with specks of white.

Lightheart, a lighthearted she-cat with pale ginger eyes.

Shadowheart, a black tom with a spitting attitude.

Apprentices:

Amberpaw, a pale ginger she-cat.

Emberpaw, a dark ginger tom.

Flamepaw, a bold ginger tom.

Queens:

Goldenwing, a golden-brown tabby she-cat with green eyes. Mate:

Shadowheart. Kits: Batkit, a black she-cat, (3 moons) Hawkkit, a golden tom. (3 moons)

Mallowheart, a gray-brown she-cat. Mate: Stoneskip. Kits: Frogkit, a brown tom. (5 moons) Sweetkit, a white and ginger she-cat. (5 moons)

Ashheart, a gray she-cat with powerful brown eyes. Mate: Acornstar. Kits: Crowkit, a gray-black tom. (4 moons) Pumpkinkit a bold ginger she-cat. (4 moons)

Elders :

Soarstep, an old, frail tom.

~•WindClan•~

Leader: Fallowstar, a cream-colored she-cat with green eyes.

Deputy: Icestorm, a completely white tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Wishheart, a gray she-cat with lavander eyes. Apprentice: Dawnpaw.

Warriors :

Graystone, a gray tom with blue eyes. Apprentice: Dandelionpaw.

Flutterpelt, a pale ginger she-cat with a blind eye.

Quailheart, a gray she-cat with brown eyes.

Rabbittail, a swift cream-colored tom with sparkling brown eyes.

Harebreeze, a pale brown tom with blue eyes.

Cloudpelt, a white tom with blue eyes.

Heartwish, a dark brown tom with brown eyes.

Waterskip, an older tom with a blue-gray pelt.

Apprentices:

Dawnpaw, a cream she-cat with dark blue eyes.

Dandelionpaw, a brown tom with brown eyes.

Queens:

Melontail, a pale brown tabby she-cat. Mate: Waterskip Kits: Hopekit, a dark brown she-cat, (3 moons) Bramblekit, a pale brown she-cat, (3 moons)

Elders:

Elderfawn, an old, brown she-cat.

~•RiverClan•~

Leader: Shimmerstar, a shiny gray she-cat.

Deputy: Lakeheart, a brown tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Seagulltail, a white tom with brown eyes.

Warriors:

Shellfur, a white she cat with a tinge of gray. Apprentice: Sandpaw

Riverdawn, a shiny gray-blue she-cat with brown eyes. Apprentice: Earthpaw

Willowhen, a light gray she-cat. Apprentice: Shinepaw

Quailfeather, a gray she-cat with spots of darker gray.

Aspenheart, a dark russet colored tom with a bold attitude.

Jaywing, a gray-blue tom with sparkling blue eyes.

Sunwhisker, a bright ginger tom with hints of white.

Volewhisker, a pale brown tom.

Mudstrike, a brown she-cat with stripes of darker brown.

Apprentices :

Sandpaw, a pale ginger tom.

Earthpaw a fully brown tom.

Shinepaw, a gray-blue she-cat.

Queens:

Streamwish, a blue-gray she-cat with white whiskers. Mate: Volewhisker. Kits: Smokekit, a gray tom. Skykit, a white tom. (Both 4 moons)

Elders:

Lillytail, an old, frail she-cat, the former RiverClan deputy.

~•ShadowClan•~

Leader: Ashstar, a gray tom with blue eyes.

Deputy: Tigerfrost, a brown tom.

Medicine Cat: Shadetail, a black tom with a dark gray tail

Warriors:

Toadstrike, a brown tom with a patch of white on his eye. Apprentice: Rabbitpaw

Leopardfrost, a pale yellow she-cat with blue eyes. Apprentice: Stonepaw

Rainwhisker, a blue-gray tom with brown eyes. Apprentice: Meadowpaw.

Rosewing, a pale ginger she-cat.

Fawnstep, a pale brown she-cat with blue eyes.

Brownwhisker, a brown tom with specks of black.

Stormheart, a gray tom with brown eyes.

Apprentices:

Rabbitpaw, a pale ginger she-cat.

Stonepaw, a gray tom.

Meadowpaw, a brown she cat.

Chapter One

[image]

"Hawkkit!" Batkit scoured the warm nursery for her brother.

Crowkit, Pumpkinkit, Batkit and Hawkkit were all playing hide and seek. "Hawkkit where are you?"

"Maybe you should check the elder's den." spoke the familiar voice of her mother, Goldenwing, nuzzling her as Batkit padded out of the den.

Batkit curiously hopped over to the elder's den and heard a small squeak of surprise, she guessed Pumpkinkit's mew, she also heard Crowkit's hiss.

She poked her head into the elder's den, "Soarstep!" she called to the old tom. "Have you seen Pumpkinkit, Crowkit and Hawkkit?" she could tell Pumpkinkit and Crowkit were laying tucked under Soarstep's soft moss bedding.

"Nope! No idea." meowed the old tom. She could hear a hint of amusement in his voice.

Batkit settled down on her haunches and hopped over Soarstep and landed squarely on Crowkit's shoulders, claws sheathed, and brought him to the ground.

Crowkit sent out a mewl of surprise but that only made her even more determined. Crowkit leaped up, throwing moss and bracken everywhere as he flung Batkit off of him.

Soarstep let out an exasperated sigh as he collected his nest back together, Pumpkinkit rushing to help.

They together tumbled over the soft sandy ground paws flailing, eyes glinting. Then she heard paws padding into the den. *Acornstar.* She thought, his scent washing over her.

"That's my boy! Get her!" Acornstar's encouraging mew surprised her. Crowkit and Pumpkinkit were Acornstar's kits.

"Now, now, you're ruining the den!"

Ashheart, Crowkit and Pumpkinkit's mother, sighed and glanced sympathetically at Soarstep.

"Dont worry, they both will clean that up." Acornstar said as Batkit pinned Crowkit down by the head. She let him go and they both stood up.

"What are you waiting for? Start cleaning!" scolded Ashheart, but there was a hint of amusement in her mew.

Batkit shook her shiny black pelt and started to collect moss scraps that had been flung everywhere. Crowkit did the same and soon they were done.

Batkit leaned close to Crowkit and whispered into his ear, "I totally crushed you!"

"Did not!" Crowkit turned on her, dropping into a fighting crouch. "Please! If you're going to play-fight, do it *outside!*" called Ashheart.

"Come on Crowkit, Pumpkinkit, let's go find Hawkkit!" the three of them bounced out of the den and looked around the clearing, there was Brushfeather organizing the evening patrols, Rivertail, Stoneskip and Swiftbreeze all circled around him with their apprentices.

Batkit scanned the clearing again, looking over each den and rock and branch then she saw a whispy golden-brown tail flashing from behind the warriors den.

Batkit narrowed her eyes and flicked her tail to indicate Crowkit and Pumpkinkit to follow. They padded slowly across the clearing to where she saw Hawkkit hiding.

"Caught you!" Batkit exclaimed, batting Hawkkit's ear with a sheathed paw. "Mousedung!" he exclaimed, returning a swipe at her tail.

Sweetkit and Frogkit were bouncing up towards them. "We're going to be apprentices!" exclaimed Sweetkit. Batkit felt a twinge of envy, she wished she was an apprentice too.

Who am I kidding? I'll be an apprentice soon, besides, Sweetkit and Frogkit are my two very best friends, she thought, pushing the feeling down. *Who cares if I'm a little late!*

Batkit bounced up to Sweetkit and Frogkit and nuzzled them with her muzzle. "That's awesome! When?" she demanded.

"Tomorrow morning, which gives us a whole day of training!" Frogkit boasted.

Batkit he cocked her head. "We just got back from talking to Acornstar" Sweetkit must have guessed she was wondering.

"I'm so excited!!" she squealed, bouncing up and down. She turned to Frogkit. "I wonder who our mentors will be!"

"I hope someone awesome, like maybe Brushfeather!" he replied. Brushfeather trained her father, Shadowheart. *Shadowheart.. I'll never figure out why he doesn't love me like he loves Hawkkit.*

"Batkit? You okay?" she jumped at the sound of Pumpkinkit's soft voice. "S-Sorry!" she responded, ears hot with embarrassment.

Frogkit, Sweetkit, Pumpkinkit and Crowkit seemed confused. "I guess I-" Batkit was interrupted by Acornstar's stern mew. "Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey, join beneath Highrock for a Clan meeting!"

Batkit looked all around, cats were padding out from their dens, into the clearing. *Soarstep, Cherryfur,* she counted them. *Rivertail, Swiftbreeze, Shadowheart...*

Shadowheart! Batkit froze, he was padding toward her, his expression unreadable. "Batkit." Shadowheart's raspy voice spat. "Come, sit. You need to watch this." he beckoned her and Hawkkit to follow him.

Batkit saw Sweetkit and Frogkit go sit by their parents and so did

Crowkit and Pumpkinkit.

Then the three apprentices, Emberpaw, Amberpaw and Flamepaw, were padding up excitedly toward the Highrock. Batkit guessed it was their warrior ceremony.

Once everyone was rested, Acornstar began the ceremonial words. "I, Acornstar of ThunderClan call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these apprentices. They have trained hard to learn your noble code and I commend them to you as warriors in their turn."

Acornstar's voice rang throughout the clearing, making Batkit shiver with excitement. "Watch quietly what they do. When it's your turn I don't want *you* embarrassing me." Shadowheart whispered.

She looked down at her paws. Why wasn't she good enough for him? "Would Emberpaw, Amberpaw and Flamepaw please step forward?" Acornstar called.

The three excitedly padded forward. Acornstar jumped down from the Highrock to meet each apprentice eye-to-eye. "Emberpaw," Acornstar met his nervous gaze.

"Do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect and defend this Clan even at the cost of your own life?"

"I do." Emberpaw responded.

"Then by the honor of StarClan, I give you your warrior name. From this day forward, you will now be known as Emberstrike, StarClan honors your bravery and courage and welcomes you as a full warrior of ThunderClan."

He said the same words for Ambermoon and Flamebreeze. "Now, by the warrior code, these young warriors will sit a silent vigil and guard the camp while we sleep."

"Emberstrike! Ambermoon! Flamebreeze!" the Clan called to them and congratulated the new warriors and they all looked up in pride.

Acornstar jumped down from Highrock flicking his tail to Emberstrike, Ambermoon and Flamebreeze to get to their vigil.

"Take notes." Shadowheart said, padding away. By now the sun was almost setting and she padded back to her den, curled up next to Goldenwing and Hawkkit, Batkit fell asleep.

Chapter Two

It was almost sunhigh when Batkit woke up. She poked her pink nose out of the den and saw Brushfeather emerge from the warriors den yawning. Featherdust, Lightheart and Stoneskip followed.

Brushfeather headed toward the camp entrance and disappeared after the thorn barrier, later seeing Ambermoon, Emberstrike and Flamebreeze emerge from it and head to the warriors den.

Batkit climbed out of the nursery and shook her pelt. She headed for the fresh-kill pile and thought she'd bring Soarstep whatever was left. Batkit dragged a small mouse from the pile toward the elders den.

Soarstep was stretching in his nest when Batkit stepped in. "Hi there, Soarstep!" she called to him. "I brought this for you, it isn't fresh but I figured you'd be hungry."

"Oh thank you, young one, I'll be glad to have a mouse. Want to share?" he offered. Batkit nodded, "Yes please!"

Batkit bit into the mouse. The warm flavors of the forest made her want to be an apprentice more than ever. "I'm four moons today!" she exclaimed, *Just two more until I can prove to Shadowheart that I'm not nothing!*

"I see. Kits get older by the moment! Frogkit and Sweetkit are to be apprenticed today?" Soarstep asked, stopping for a moment to bite into the mouse.

"Yep! I can't wait to see their ceremony!" Batkit exclaimed. "I wonder who will get which kit." she added.

"I think I'm going to try and take a nap in the sun before the ceremony, I could use it. Thanks for the mouse!" Soarstep padded past her and went to lie in a sunny spot.

Batkit padded out to see Frogkit and Sweetkit talking to Acornstar. "When is the ceremony?" she overheard the desperate mew of Frogkit.

"Once the hunting patrol gets back, then you'll be apprentices." Acornstar dismissed them. Sweetkit looked annoyed. "That will take forever!" she exclaimed.

Sweetkit spotted Batkit and beckoned for Frogkit to follow. "I guess I'm gonna have to get use to calling you guys a new name!" Batkit meowed to the both of them once they arrived.

"Yep! Soon! We just *have* to wait for the hunting patrol!" Sweetkit complained. Frogkit cuffed her ear, "The Clan's got to be fed somehow!" Frogkit pointed out.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath highrock for a Clan meeting!"

Batkit looked back at the thorn entrance, the hunting patrol was already back and dropping what few prey they had. It was almost leaf-bare after all.

Goldenwing and the rest of the queens were heading out to rest in the clearing beside their kits.

Frogkit and Sweetkit looked ecstatic, their mother Mallowheart, came padding out and licked them both on the head and sat down behind them.

Their father Stoneskip, padded proudly up behind them and sat down.

"Today two kits have reached six moons and its time for them to become apprentices." Acornstar's voice rang clear and bold.

"Would Sweetkit and Frogkit please step forward?" the two kits bounced forward but slowed as they approached the leader.

Acornstar met the eyes of Sweetkit. "From this day forward until you earn your warrior name, you will now be known as Sweetpaw." Batkit could see that Sweetpaw was bursting with excitement. "Your

mentor, Featherdust."

Featherdust proudly padded up to her new apprentice and touched her nose to Sweetpaw's.

"Now," Acornstar went on and met Frogkit's nervous gaze. "From this day forward you will now be known as Frogpaw. Your mentor, Lightheart."

Lightheart padded up to Frogpaw and touched her nose to his. "I'm excited to train you." she said warmly.

"Frogpaw! Sweetpaw!" Batkit called their names and the Clan joined in.

Acornstar waved for Brushfeather to hop onto Highrock. "I have something to announce" Brushfeather said, he looked old and tired.

"I am going to be retiring to the elder's den." he announced, the crowd shared murmurs of concerned mews.

Acornstar lifted his head, Brushfeather jumped down. "I say these words in honor of Brushfeather,"

Batkit wondered who would be the new deputy. "So that StarClan can hear and approve of my choice."

Acornstar stopped for a moment to think. "Rivertail will be the new deputy of ThunderClan." mews of approval rippled throughout the clearing and the cats parted to make a path for Rivertail to get through.

Brushfeather dipped his head to Rivertail as she nodded proudly to Acornstar. Acornstar dismissed the Clan and everyone went back to their duties.

Batkit scanned the crowd for Sweetpaw and Frogpaw, she wanted to see them before they went out. "Sweetpaw! Frogpaw! I just wanted to congratulate you before you went out!" Sweetpaw nodded and said, "Thank you! I can't wait!"

"Yeah! I bet you wish you could come with us! We're going to see

the territory!" Frogpaw boasted, puffing out his chest.

"If you want to go then we should get on our way!" Lightheart said nosing both of them towards the thorn entrance.

"Good luck! Bye!" Batkit said, calling to them. She turned away and headed for the fresh-kill pile. "Oh! Hey Hawkkit" he was dragging a small shrew from the pile.

"Hey Batkit! Wanna share?" He asked, pushing the shrew towards her. "Sure!" She bent down to bite into the shrew.

"So," Hawkkit started. "Are you excited to be an apprentice?" Batkit finished her share then replied, "oh definitely," she explained during licks, "it will be the best thing in the world! Other than being a warrior of course."

Allegiances

[image]

~•ThunderClan•~

Leader: Acornstar, a brown-red tom with green eyes.

Deputy: Rivertail, a flowy gray-blue she-cat with sparkling blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Cherryfur, a pale ginger she-cat with a completely white tail. Apprentice: Pumpkinpaw

Warriors:

Stoneskip, a solid gray tom with green eyes.

Featherdust, a pale brown she-cat with specks of white. Apprentice: Sweetpaw

Lightheart, a lighthearted she-cat with pale ginger eyes. Apprentice: Frogpaw.

Shadowheart, a black tom with a spitting attitude. Apprentice: Crowpaw

Ambermoon, a pale ginger she cat with brown eyes. Apprentice: Batpaw

Emberstrike, a bold ginger tom with blue eyes. Apprentice: Hawkpaw

Flamebreeze, a ginger tom with green eyes.

Mallowheart, a gray-brown she-cat.

Ashheart, a gray she-cat with powerful brown eyes.

Goldenwing, a golden-brown she-cat with green eyes.

Apprentices:

Sweetpaw, a ginger-white she-cat with one green eye and one brown eye. (8 moons)

Frogpaw, a brown tom with dark brown eyes. (8 moons)

Crowpaw, a gray-black tom with green eyes. (7 moons)

Pumpkinpaw, a pale ginger she-cat with pale orange eyes. (7 moons)

Batpaw, a brown-black she-cat with green eyes. (6 moons)

Hawkpaw, a golden-brown tom with brown eyes. (6 moons)

Queens:

Swiftbreeze, white she cat with blue eyes. Mate: unknown. Kits: None yet.

Elders :

Soarstep, an old, frail tom.

Brushfeather, pale brown tabby tom, former deputy of ThunderClan.

~•WindClan•~

Leader: Fallowstar, a cream-colored she-cat with green eyes.

Deputy: Icestorm, a completely white tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Wishheart, a gray she-cat with lavander eyes. Apprentice: Dawnwing

Warriors :

Graystone, a gray tom with blue eyes. Apprentice: Hopepaw

Flutterpelt, a pale ginger she-cat. Apprentice: Bramblepaw

Quailheart, a gray she-cat with brown eyes.

Rabbittail, a swift cream-colored tom with sparkling brown eyes.

Harebreeze, a pale brown tom with blue eyes.

Cloudpelt, a white tom with blue eyes.

Heartwish, a dark brown tom with brown eyes.

Dandelionheart, a brown tom with brown eyes.

Melontail, pale brown tabby she-cat.

Apprentices:

Dawnwing, a cream she-cat with dark blue eyes.

Hopepaw, a dark brown she-cat. (6 moons)

Bramblepaw, a pale brown she-cat. (6 moons)

Elders:

Elderfawn, an old, brown she-cat.

~•RiverClan•~

Leader: Shimmerstar, a shiny gray she-cat.

Deputy: Lakeheart, a brown tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Seagulltail, a white tom with brown eyes.

Warriors:

Shellfur, a white she cat with a tinge of gray. Apprentice: Smokepaw

Riverdawn, a shiny gray-blue she-cat with brown eyes. Apprentice: Skypaw

Willowhen, a light gray she-cat.

Quailfeather, a gray she-cat with spots of darker gray.

Aspenheart, a dark russet colored tom with a bold attitude.

Jaywing, a gray-blue tom with sparkling blue eyes.

Sunwhisker, a bright ginger tom with hints of white.

Volewhisker, a pale brown tom.

Sandheart, a pale ginger tom with brown eyes.

Earthroot, a full brown tom with green eyes.

Shinewhisker, a gray-blue she-cat.

Apprentices :

Smokepaw, a gray tom with brown eyes. (6 moons)

Skypaw, a full white tom with blue eyes. (6 moons)

Queens:

Mudstrike, a brown she-cat with stripes of darker brown. Mate: Sunwhisker. Kits: none yet

~•ShadowClan•~

Leader: Ashstar, a gray tom with blue eyes.

Deputy: Tigerfrost, a brown tom.

Medicine Cat: Shadetail, a black tom with a dark great tail.

Warriors:

Toadstrike, a brown tom with a patch of white on his eye. Apprentice: Rabbitpaw

Leopardfrost, a pale yellow she-cat with blue eyes. Apprentice:

Stonepaw

Rainwhisker, a blue-gray tom with brown eyes. Apprentice: Meadowpaw

Rosewing, a pale ginger she-cat.

Brownwhisker, a brown tom with specks of black.

Stormheart, a gray tom with brown eyes.

Apprentices:

Rabbitpaw, a pale ginger she-cat. (10 moons)

Stonepaw, a gray tom. (10 moons)

Meadowpaw, a brown she cat. (10 moons)

Queens:

Fawnstep, a pale brown she-cat with blue eyes. Mate: Stormheart. Kits: none yet.

Chapter Three

[image]

"Batkit! Wake up!" Hawkkit's familiar voice woke her up. "It's time for our apprentice ceremony!" Batkit opened her eyes and saw Hawkkit shaking her awake.

"Okay! Okay I'm up!" Batkit exclaimed.

Goldenwing then wrapped her tail around Batkit, guiding her towards her and she started to groom her. "Goldenwing! I don't need *that!* I'm going to be an apprentice!" exclaimed Batkit, squirming away from her.

"That's even more a reason to make you look presentable!" Goldenwing said as she pulled her back, but they could hear Acornstar calling to the Clan and gathering them all together.

Goldenwing sighed and waved her tail for them to follow. Batkit and Hawkkit followed quickly behind. The Clan was gathering beneath Highrock already.

Batkit couldn't wait to be an apprentice, she could be with her denmates again and have her own nest and mentor, but most importantly, she could train to *fight!*

"Would Batkit and Hawkkit please step forward?" Acornstar called. Goldenwing gently nudged them away from her and they begun to pad toward the Highrock.

Batkit looked around, she spotted Sweetpaw, Frogpaw, Pumpkinpaw and Crowpaw all sitting together. Sweetpaw gave her a reassuring nod as she slowly padded up.

Acornstar's tall, muscular body shook as he spoke the traditional words for apprentice naming. "Hawkkit, you have reached your sixth moon and are ready to become an apprentice, from this day forward, you'll now be known as Hawkpaw," Hawkpaw's eyes shone

with pride. "Your mentor, Emberstrike."

Emberstrike proudly walked up to Hawkpaw and touched his nose to Hawpaw's.

"Batkit," Acornstar went on, "you have also reached your sixth moon. From this day forward, you'll now be known as Batpaw, your mentor, Ambermoon."

Batpaw saw the crowd part where Ambermoon was sitting. She got up and walked slowly towards Batpaw. Once she reached her, she felt utterly small but she reached to touch her nose to hers.

"Hawkpaw! Batpaw! Hawkpaw! Batpaw!" Batpaw heard the voices of her Clanmates all around her, she looked around, a happy squeal sounded from her mouth.

The Clan parted from the clearing and she looked around for Hawkpaw, who was already heading for the entrance. Then a dark shadow loomed over her. Batpaw looked up in surprise as her father was glaring down at her.

"Stop acting like a kit. Bat*kit*." Shadowheart growled. Batpaw looked down at her paws, then at Ambermoon who had her fur spiked, eyes blazing.

"It's Bat*paw*! You foxheart!" Ambermoon hissed, Shadowheart turned to her.

"What did you just say to me?"

Ambermoon didn't back down. "You're the worst father ever! Fathers tend to encourage their kits, not puke on their dreams! Dont *think* I haven't heard what you say to Batpaw!"

Shadowheart looked shocked at the newer warrior standing up to him. "What do you know? Your father happened to be nothing but a lowdown mousebrained fool!"

Batpaw stood there shocked. Ambermoon's father was Lemontail, one of the warriors who fought and died in a battle with a badger.

Ambermoon looked down at her paws. Batpaw licked her shoulder for comfort. Shadowheart happily walked away to his den.

"Your father was the greatest warrior ever, Ambermoon, and the best father too" Batpaw reassured her.

"Goldenwing told me all the wonderful stories about him, when he single-pawed found the badger set and fought to keep the badger away from harming his Clan."

Batpaw nuzzled her. "He would have been very proud of who you've become.." Batpaw trailed off as Ambermoon looked lovingly at Batpaw. "Thank you," she whispered, "now let me show you the territory, young one."

***

Batpaw was curled up in her new nest next to Crowpaw. His tail was wrapped around her by accident, she didn't mind.

Ambermoon and Batpaw did a lot today, they saw the Great Sycamore, and Snakerocks, where she saw Pumpkinpaw and Cherryfur collecting herbs, and the last thing she saw was Sunningrocks, where she explained the ongoing battle with RiverClan.

Ambermoon then told her all about the warrior code as they padded in the Tallpines past the Twolegplace on their way back to camp.

Batpaw was then ordered by Acornstar to bring fresh-kill to the elders and she heard a big, long story from Soarstep.

Batpaw sighed and rested her head down. Then Crowpaw's deep breathing soon lulled her to sleep.

Batpaw jolted awake by a paw prodding her side. She opened her eyes to see Ambermoon pawing her. "Time for training." she said gently.

Batpaw scrambled out of her nest and shook her pelt. Today was even colder, leaf-bare was here. Ambermoon and Batpaw padded out of the shelter of the camp and into the ravine where they

climbed up.

"Okay so today I'm teaching you how to hunt first." Ambermoon explained, Batpaw nodded enthusiastically.

"So first," Ambermoon pawed together some moss. "I'm going to show you how you would catch your prey, and then I want you to try it."

Ambermoon put the moss down and backed up. "You always want to check your wind, you want to be downwind of your prey so it doesn't scent you."

Ambermoon dropped down into a crouch. "Then, you drop into what is called a hunting crouch,"

Batpaw was amazed by how sneaky she looked. "Then you wiggle your haunches like this," Ambermoon instructed, "and pounce!" Ambermoon flew through the air and landed perfectly on the moss.

"Wow!" Batpaw exclaimed, "I wanna learn how to do that!" Batpaw was extremely excited to learn to feed her Clan.

"You will, in time, for now I want you to show me your best hunting crouch."

Batpaw nodded, she was determined to prove to Shadowheart that she can do something right. She wanted to be the best warrior ever!

Batpaw dropped down into a crouch, mimicking Ambermoon and started to wiggle her hanches. "Like this?" She asked "That's perfect," Ambermoon replied, she looked happy with her.

"Now," Ambermoon went on, "I want to see you pounce on the moss, and when you do, bite it like this," Ambermoon bit the moss as if it were a real prey. "Got it?" she asked.

"Yep!" Batpaw replied. Ambermoon placed the moss a few tail-lengths away. Batpaw returned to a hunting crouch, remembering to check her wind, she was downwind.

Batpaw wiggled her hanches and jumped up the same way

Ambermoon had instructed but she landed a few tail-lengths away from the moss. "Foxdung!" she cursed.

"Hey, its okay, you'll get it, I remember my first time, I landed straight into a tree." Ambermoon reassured her, putting her tail on Batpaw's shoulder.

"You landed into a *tree?!*" Batpaw snorted, surprised. "Yep! Rivertail said that I probably scared away all the prey from here to the Moonstone!"

Batpaw had heard about the Moonstone before, it was a magical place where apprentices had to go before they became warriors, and leaders got their nine lives!

Batpaw wondered what it was like to be leader. *Batstar.* It had a ring to it! She wished she could be leader one day, *but I want kits too...*

Maybe Batpaw could have kits and then become leader, she didn't know yet though, it was a long ways away!

Chapter Four

"Ow!" Batpaw exclaimed, she was carrying a rabbit into camp but she trod on something sharp.

"You okay, Batpaw?" Asked Crowpaw, worry filling his gaze. Batpaw, Crowpaw, Hawkpaw, Sweetpaw and Frogpaw were all ordered to go and hunt for the Clan.

"Yeah, I should be," she said through the rabbit. "Here, let me take that," Crowpaw offered, he took it from her mouth.

The five of them only found a scrawny mouse and two shrews on their trip, but Batpaw got lucky, on her way back to camp, she caught the huge, thick rabbit.

It had been only a moon since she became an apprentice and she was getting the hang of hunting now.

Batpaw checked her pad, there was a huge thorn embedded into the base of it. Blood welled around it. "Mousedung." She cursed.

Once Sweetpaw, Hawkpaw and Frogpaw had dropped their prey they went to their mentors but Crowpaw stayed behind to check Batpaw.

"Go get Cherryfur to look at it, you don't want an infection." he said, Crowpaw could be so caring, she didnt understand why. *Could he.. no! He just is caring towards other cats, I'm sure he'd do the same for any cat.. right..?*

"No, I dont want to busy her by a thorn, Swiftbreeze's kits are due any day now" Batpaw responded. Crowpaw just rolled his eyes. "I'm helping you to the medicine cat's den."

"Fine." Batpaw allowed herself to put her weight on Crowpaw. He helped her to Cherryfur and Pumpkinpaw's den.

"Cherryfur?" Crowpaw called. "Yes?" A soft voice responded. "What

do you need?" Cherryfur sniffed, curiously. "Sorry for bothering you but I have a thorn in my pad!" Exclaimed Batpaw as another wave of pain rolled through her paw.

"Okay, let me take a look, give me your paw" Cherryfur instructed. Batpaw nervously raised her injured paw. "Yep, a thorn. Here," she gripped the thorn between her teeth and pulled it out.

Batpaw squeaked in surprise, blood started welling out of the wound. "Pumpkinpaw!" Called Cherryfur to the back of the den. "Get some marigold and cobwebs!"

She heard Pumpkinpaw's mew. "Okay, Cherryfur!" Cherryfur started to lick Batpaw's pad. It was stopping to bleed.

Soon Pumpkinpaw came out with some herbs in her jaws and cobwebs too. "Do you know why we use marigold?" Cherryfur asked Pumpkinpaw as she started to chew up the marigold.

"To keep off infection?" Pumpkinpaw asked, wrinkling her nose at the smell of the herb as Cherryfur applied it. "Correct, then we add cobwebs to.." she trailed off "To keep the marigold on and keep back bleeding!" Pumpkinpaw finished.

Batpaw was surprised at how much Pumpkinpaw knew. Cherryfur looked up, shocked too. "Very good, Pumpkinpaw," she praised. "I want you to keep off of that paw for the rest of today, come and see me at sunhigh tomorrow." Cherryfur instructed.

"What about training?" Batpaw questioned, she didn't want to miss a day! "I'll see how your paw is tomorrow, if it's showing signs of infection, you'll be off training until it's healed." Cherryfur replied.

"Now go to your nest and rest. I need to check on Swiftbreeze." Cherryfur pushed past her with Pumpkinpaw trailing behind.

"I'll help you, and bring a piece of fresh-kill too, maybe we could share that rabbit..?" Crowpaw looked nervous saying those words. "That'd be great, thanks!" Batpaw replied.

Batpaw leaned against Crowpaw's shoulder, limping back to the apprentices den. By now the sun was setting and there was a

beautiful sunset.

"Oh wow!" she exclaimed, stopping for a minute, adoring the pale orange sunset. "You like that?" Crowpaw asked, looking thoughtful. "Of course, the sunset is the best thing ever, we should sneak out to Sunningrocks to see it better!" Batpaw said eagerly.

"Erm I dont know, that's all the way across the territory.. with your paw.." Crowpaw pointed out.

She rolled her eyes. "Fine, let's go eat." Batpaw limped on next to Crowpaw.

They reached her nest and Batpaw sat down. "I'm gonna go find you that rabbit now." Crowpaw said briefly before exciting the den.

Batpaw licked her paw, it hurt a little bit but she knew it would heal. She heard a rustle at the den entrance, Crowpaw's warm scent fell over her.

"I got the rabbit," Crowpaw said as he settled down into his nest, Batpaw took a bite. "Thank you again, Crowpaw." she murmured, looking into his deep, green gaze.. getting lost..

"Batpaw? You okay?" his soft mew startled her. "S-sorry! Yeah I'm fine, what were you saying?" she licked her chest fur in embarrassment.

Crowpaw just laughed and gently flicked her with his tail. Batpaw playfully let out a battle cry and tackled him, claws sheathed, and held him to the ground, watching her paw.

Crowpaw heaved upwards and pinned her. Crowpaw stared deep into her gaze, she met his eyes, unblinking. "I was saying how rabbits were my favorite prey."

Crowpaw murmured, laughing slightly, getting up. "Mouse is way better," Batpaw argued.

Crowpaw sighed and looked at her. Batpaw and Crowpaw just stared into eachother's eyes for what felt like forever.

Then Crowpaw sort of leaned in to touch his nose to hers, she was shocked but stayed exactly where she was.

"Swiftbreeze! She's having her kits!" She jumped to the sound of Sweetpaw crashing into the apprentice's den. "Ooh, sorry was I interrupting something?~" She said with a smirk on her face.

"U-uh no!!" Batpaw buried her head into the moss below her.

"Haha," Crowpaw laughed heartfully. "Come on, Batpaw! New kits will be born soon!"

Crowpaw went to her side as she got up. "I'll be fine, Crowpaw, thanks." Batpaw mewed as she limped out of the den.

Sweetpaw, Frogpaw and Hawkpaw were all crowded outside of the nursery. "Out of my way!" Called Cherryfur, though herbs in her jaws.

The crowd of apprentices parted to let the medicine cat through. Batpaw heard a groan from Swiftbreeze, she guessed her kits would be coming now.

Swiftbreeze screeched, and after a few heartbeats of silence she heard Cherryfur exclaim, "a beautiful she-kit!" and Batpaw let out the breath she had been holding.

Where was Pumpkinpaw? Batpaw wondered but the thought traveled to the back of her mind as Swiftbreeze gave another painful sounding screech.

Batpaw prayed Swiftbreeze would be okay. "You're okay, Swiftbreeze, just one more kit!" Cherryfur encouraged. Swiftbreeze screeched.

"And a tom!" Cherryfur announced at last, Batpaw almost thought she was going to pass out.

"Can we see them yet?" Sweetpaw demanded as Cherryfur poked her head out. "Fine but only two at a time."

"Frogpaw and Hawkpaw, you come first." They both went inside to

see ThunderClan's new little warriors.

Pumpkinpaw bounded up to side with Batpaw. "Where have you been?" asked Batpaw, "you missed Swiftbreeze's kitting!"

"I was collecting herbs, is she okay?" she responded, distracted by the tiny mewls. "She sounds okay, I can't wait to see the kits, Frogpaw and Hawkpaw are in now."

Pumpkinpaw nodded curtly. Frogpaw and Hawkpaw came out. "They're so cute! And Swiftbreeze is doing great." Frogpaw said as he padded towards the apprentice's den, Hawkpaw followed.

"Come on in, Sweetpaw and Batpaw." Cherryfur said, beckoning them inside. Batpaw padded into the nursery, she hasn't been in the nursery for what felt like forever!

Curled up to Swiftbreeze were a small gray she-kit and a yellow-white tom. The tiny kits were suckling Swiftbreeze for milk.

"They're so cute!" exclaimed Batpaw. "What are their names?" she asked Swiftbreeze.

"The tom is Oakkit and the she-kit is Moonkit" Swiftbreeze responded tiredly. "I don't see a tom around here.." Remarked Sweetpaw. "Who is their father?"

"I..I'm sorry, Batpaw, but Shadowheart is the father of these kits.."

Chapter Five

"What?!" Batpaw froze. "Shadowheart is the father!" she exclaimed. "How could you, Swiftbreeze?"

"It wasn't my fault! Shadowheart.. he..." Swiftbreeze trailed off. "I don't believe this.." Batpaw glared at Swiftbreeze.

"Batpaw.." Sweetpaw rested her head on Batpaw's. She flinched away. "No! I am going to tell Goldenwing!"

"Batpaw, she's asleep in the warrior's den! Don't wake her!" Swiftbreeze called after her.

"Oh you just want your precious secret to stay hidden!" Batpaw spat at her.

Batpaw burst out of the nursery, ignoring the increasing pain in her paw. Rushing past Crowpaw and Pumpkinpaw, she skidded to a stop infront of the warriors den.

"Goldenwing! Goldenwing!" She exclaimed, heading into the warrior's den. "Oh no you don't!" Swiftbreeze bit the end of her tail and dragged her back away from the warrior's den.

"Hey!" Batpaw spun around angrily. "Listen to me! I am *not* Shadowheart's secret mate! Why would I even do that to Goldenwing! She's my sister!"

Batpaw agreed she had a point but she was still angry. "Explain the kits then!" she glared at her.

"Batpaw.. I am very tired.." Swiftbreeze lowered her head. "Tell me *now*" Batpaw insisted.

"In the morning." Swiftbreeze begun to stalk back towards the nursery.

Batpaw tried to go after her but Crowpaw stopped her. "Come, walk

with me." he led her away with his tail.

"Fine." Batpaw stomped off with Crowpaw. They both padded out of camp and out into the woods. They both were silent for a couple of heartbeats, padding down and climbing the ravine.

"I'm sorry you had to find out that way," Crowpaw begun once they had reached the top of the ravine.

"Don't be sorry." Batpaw concluded. "Why did you bring me out here?" Batpaw and Crowpaw turned to head up the small slope that lead to the Great Sycamore.

"To stop you from ripping Swiftbreeze's pelt off." Crowpaw chuckled. Batpaw rolled her eyes.

"I don't know what to think anymore." Batpaw's expression suddenly changed. She shook her head.

"Hey, you'll be okay, I'm here to help you, always." Crowpaw rested his tail on her shoulder and they were walking close to where their pelts brushed.

They reached the Great Sycamore, it was way bigger than she remembered seeing it a moon ago, she hasn't come back since!

"Wow!" Batpaw exclaimed, looking at the tall, old sycamore tree, it was hard to see in the dark but the light of the half-moon sort of lit it up.

"I guess I'm half-related to Moonkit and Oakkit." she went on. "I never thought of having other siblings but Hawkpaw."

Crowpaw nodded in agreement. "But aren't Sweetpaw and Frogpaw like siblings to you?" he asked

"I mean I guess, but they've been more like close denmates or best friends." Batpaw replied thoughtfully.

Crowpaw touched his nose to hers again. His green gaze warming her and reassuring her that it would be okay.

"I like you, Batpaw," Crowpaw said nervously. "A lot, and I know that we are only apprentices but I can't hide my feelings for you any longer."

Batpaw's paws felt like they were rooted to the ground. She was shocked. All throughout her body she felt warm, happy.

"I..I.." she stuttered "I want to wait until I am a warrior before picking a mate.."

"But, the only thing I wish to know is if you love me too." Crowpaw looked down at his paws.

After what seemed like forever, Batpaw had the confidence to respond. "I do, as of right now. But in the future I cannot promise anything.." she explained carefully.

Crowpaw nodded understandingly. "We're still young after all." he said before whisking away into the bushes.

Batpaw thought about calling after him but then she got really dizzy. Things around her started spinning then she lost all of her senses one by one. Then she fell to the ground.

***

"Batpaw! Batpaw!" A familiar voice called out her name. *Goldenwing!* Batpaw tried to respond but all that came out was a groan.

"Get Cherryfur!" Goldenwing's distressed mew did not make things any better. It seemed like Goldenwing was on a patrol of some sort because there were other cats there.

Batpaw panicked when she realized that she couldn't move at all. *What the heck happened to me!?*

Then she heard Cherryfur's mew. "She will be okay, but I need to take her to my den *now*."

Batpaw felt herself being picked up. *I hate this! What is wrong with me!?* She thought angrily.

Batpaw's head felt heavier and she passed out again.

***

It seemed to have been days before Batpaw opened her eyes again, and when she did, for the first time, she saw Cherryfur looked cautiously down at her.

"Ch-Cherryfur..?" Batpaw managed to make out those words.
"Batpaw!" Cherryfur exclaimed. "You're going to be okay."

"Wh-what happened t-to m-me..?" Batpaw felt helpless, no pain, suffering, the only pain she felt wasn't physical..

Cherryfur hesitated. "You had an infection in your pad but I don't think that's why you fainted." she said at last, worry filling her gaze.

"You might have anxiety." Cherryfur concluded. "You need to be careful around certain groups of people, and Gatherings wouldn't be good for you.."

What!? No Gatherings!? "B-but.." Batpaw trailed off, loss for words.
"And battles wouldn't be good either."

"Do you *have* to list off everything I can't do?" those words just popped out of Batpaw's mouth. She looked away, preparing herself for a scold.

But Cherryfur simply sighed. "I'm keeping you here until I've noticed a change with your behaviour, dealing with many cats at a time."

I don't know if it's going to change. Batpaw added to herself.
"Ambermoon is here to see you." Cherryfur mewed.

"Hey Batpaw, are you doing okay?" Ambermoon gently touched her nose to Batpaw's as she padded into the den.

"No.." she muttered. "Cherryfur said I have stupid anxiety." Batpaw looked down at her paws. "Does that mean I dont get to be a warrior?"

"No! I will make sure you get to become a warrior if it's the last thing I do!" Ambermoon had a look of deep determination in her gaze.

"Okay.." Batpaw still looked unsure. "But I will miss out on a lot of training.." Batpaw really wanted to be the best warrior possible.

"Nonsense, I can still teach you, verbally! I'll teach you a bunch of things you should remember, then you'd be the smartest apprentice coming back into full training!"

Ambermoon looked awfully determined. That was making Batpaw feel better but a stone still held deep in her belly, *if I have dumb anxiety, then I can't be leader.*

Batpaw really wanted to be leader, not only to care for her Clan but to prove to Shadowheart once and for all that she was something other than a dumb apprentice.

Maybe I should try to ask Cherryfur if I can overcome my anxiety, and when I do, I will become a super strong and loyal warrior who will lead my Clan to great strength !

Chapter Six

"There we go Batpaw!" Cherryfur encouraged as she tried to stand again. It had been a couple sunrises since what happened at the Great Sycamore.

Ambermoon and Cherryfur were pressed up against her sides and helping lifting her up.

"I-I'm doing it!" Batpaw stammered, *I wish my anxiety would dissapear. Cherryfur said that there was no way to overcome it, but she also said how Shimmerstar of RiverClan had anxiety.. and she's leader!*

"Ambermoon?" Batpaw asked as Ambermoon and Cherryfur let her stand on her own. "Yes Batpaw?" Ambermoon wasn't paying attention. "You're doing it!"

Batpaw layed back down in annoyance. "Can I talk to you alone?" she murmured, looking down at her paws.

"Uhh sure.." Ambermoon looked at Cherryfur. "I need to collect tansy anyways. Pumpkinpaw?" she called.

The beautiful pale-ginger she-cat padded out from the herb store. "Coming!" she quickly ran out of the den after her mentor.

"Yes, Batpaw?" Ambermoon asked, licking her paw.

"I need to speak with Shimmerstar, she had anxiety, I want to know how she overcame it and became leader." the words sort of slipped out of her mouth.

"Hm." Ambermoon drew her paw over her ear. "I can take you there, but we have to speak to Acornstar first." she concluded.

"O-Okay.." Batpaw was nervous to talk to both Acornstar and Shimmerstar.. what about all the judgmental looks, and how was she supposed to make it all the way to RiverClan territory, in her condition?

"I'll talk to Acornstar, and surely Shimmerstar will step out of camp to speak with us." Ambermoon seemed to have guessed what Batpaw was thinking.

"Okay.." Batpaw mewed. "Can you find Crowpaw for me too?" she asked, trying not to sound desperate.

"Sure." to Batpaw's luck, Ambermoon didn't question her any more. Ambermoon left the medicine den.

A few moments later Crowpaw came into the den. "Hey." he said, staring at her with a cold gaze. "Thanks for leaving me that night." Batpaw returned the gaze back to him.

"How was I supposed to know you fainted?" he said sternly. "I- well you did leave me in the middle of the forest, coldly!" she retorted.

"You rejected me, what do you expect?" Crowpaw spat back before whisking out of the den.

Well that's something he's good at, leaving. "Batpaw, Acornstar said we can go." Ambermoon called from outside of the den, poking her head inside.

Batpaw tried to stand, pushing up with her paws carefully. She padded slowly out of the den. Most of the Clan were out on patrols or hunting.

Ambermoon rested her tail on Batpaw, guiding her to the thorn entrance. They walked slowly up the ravine and down following the river past the Sandy Hollow and down to Sunningrocks.

"So, you're going to have to cross the stepping stones if we are to go to RiverClan," said Ambermoon as they padded down further to the stepping stones.

Batpaw gave her a look of worry. "I.. don't know if I can." she looked down at her paws.

"I suppose I can see if I can convince Shimmerstar to come down here, I have some friends in RiverClan.." Ambermoon trailed off, staring in the direction of RiverClan.

"Okay," Batpaw sat down, relieved. "I can wait." Ambermoon nodded and headed for the first stone. She leaped it, and a few heartbeats passed and she made it to the other side.

Batpaw looked back at her ruffled fur, she didn't want to meet the RiverClan leader looking like a hedgehog!

She licked her paw and drew it carefully over her back, smoothening the ruffled fur.

She then licked her tail, chest and paws before looking across the river. No sign of them yet. *I wonder if I should catch something for Shimmerstar.. I don't know how to fish but I've heard rumors of some RiverClan warriors liking shrew!*

Batpaw tasted the air, filling her senses with the pungent scents of the forest.

Bracken, stone, shrew, moss... Shrew! Batpaw quickly bent downward, checking her wind, she looked around trying to detect the shrew, then she spotted it, a black shrew hiding beneath some roots of a maple tree.

She crawled carefully forward, watching her paw, and she quickly hooked the shrew up with her claws sending it high up in the air.

The shrew gave out a squeak of surprise as it landed a fox-length away, stunned.

Batpaw pounced quickly and bit it swiftly in the neck. *I hope Shimmerstar likes this, I know I would!*

Batpaw picked up the still-warm shrew, mouth watering, and carried it back to Sunningrocks.

Fighting the urge to eat it, she layed down and put the shrew beside her to keep it warm.

Soon, which felt like a sunrise, she saw Ambermoon and Shimmerstar leaping over the stepping stones.

They both landed safely on Sunningrocks and both padded up to

Batpaw. She sat up and licked her chest fur as it was ruffled.

H-Hi Shimerstar." Batpaw said nervously, shuffling her paws. "Hello young one, Ambermoon says you would like to speak with me."

Shimmerstar's calm, gentle gaze settled on Batpaw's, making her feel less nervous.

"Y-yes, I'd like to speak to you about how to overcome anxiety." Batpaw explained, getting more comfortable.

"One day, I want to be leader, like you and I want to lead my Clan but I can't if I suffer from anxiety." Shimmerstar's eyes grew wider.

"I can definitely help with that, as you've heard, I used to have anxiety and it made training really hard but I found ways to adapt and eventually, it went away." Shimmerstar replied.

"Oh! Um, you can have this shrew if you tell me!" She passed the shrew to Shimmerstar.

She looked down, trying to look grateful but she could see that Shimmerstar really didn't want to eat it. Shimmerstar ate up the shrew anyway in a few swift bites, wrinkling her nose at the stench.

"Thank you, now." Shimmerstar sat down and begun to smoothen her fur. "What I did to overcome anxiety was I tried to get comfortable with a small group of people at a time, and then get used to more and more until my anxiety dissapeared completely."

Batpaw thought for a while. She knew she could do the same. "But it wasn't easy, I had no one to encourage me." Shimmerstar looked down at her paws then rested a determined gaze on Batpaw.

"You need to *promise* me that you will stay strong and never ever give up, like I did once."

Batpaw nodded her head, feeling determination rise in her chest. "I will try my best, Shimmerstar!"

Shimmerstar curtly nodded and waved her tail, indicating that she was leaving.

"Goodbye, young one, and you're welcome!" Shimmerstar called, leaping across the river, stone after stone.

Ambermoon led Batpaw with her tail as they headed back to camp. "We should probably hunt, are you up to it?"

"Sure!" Batpaw replied, she noticed that her paw wasnt hurting as much anymore.

Chapter Seven

Batpaw curled into her new nest in the apprentice's den. Cherryfur had let her out of the medicine cat's den today, saying to keep it easy, training.

Batpaw felt exhausted, after talking with Shimmerstar, she and Ambermoon went hunting and they caught the best amount of prey this season, new-leaf was approaching soon but leaf-bare was cold and bitter.

StarClan had blessed ThunderClan with no sign of whitecough or greencough though, she guessed they were looking down on her Clan and protecting them from the lethal sickness.

Batpaw prayed that StarClan would bless ThunderClan for the rest of leaf-bare too, the thought of losing her dear Clanmates hurt her heart.

She had to switch nests with Frogpaw because Crowpaw moved uncomfortably close to her, now she slept near the entrance, Frogpaw behind her, then Crowpaw, Sweetpaw and Hawkpaw.

Crowpaw had been acting really strange lately, everytime she had gotten up to get her prey, he would always watch her from the shadows, muttering to himself.

Batpaw didn't like the way he treated her, she wanted to tell Sweetpaw but she feared she'd ridicule her, after all, they've known eachother for their entire life.

Batpaw shrugged it off and quickly dosed off to sleep.

***

Batpaw was jolted awake by the squeals of Oakkit and Moonkit playing outside of the apprentice's den.

Sweetpaw and Frogpaw lifted their heads in annoyance. She looked

passed Frogpaw to see that Crowpaw was already gone.

Good, I really don't want to deal with him. Batpaw thought. Sweetpaw let out a hiss of annoyance. "Hard for us to sleep with mewling kits waking us up!" she groaned.

"Hey, just think, we were the same way, what do you think Ambermoon, Emberstrike and Flamebreeze thought?" Batpaw playfully cuffed her on the ear.

"You have a point.. come on," Sweetpaw flicked her tail, they all got up. "Let's get some prey!" she padded past Batpaw and marched out of the den. Frogpaw and Batpaw sluggishly followed.

Batpaw stepped out of the den. It was getting slightly warmer, but frost still covered the ground. She sniffed around, trying to pick up Crowpaw's scent, so she didn't run into him by surprise.

Then she detected it. By the elder's den. She crept around and headed carefully towards the fresh-kill pile.

"What's with you?" asked Frogpaw, coming up behind her, "you look like you're stalking a rabbit or something."

"Oh uh nothing!" Batpaw replied, getting up. "Just getting my prey!" Batpaw quickly snagged an old shrew from the pile.

"You want *that*?" Frogpaw asked, looking disgusted. "I'm getting the better piece," he grabbed a small moor rabbit.

"Get something better than that and come eat with Sweetpaw and I." Frogpaw took the rabbit and bounded off to settle next to Sweetpaw.

Batpaw put down the old shrew and grabbed a wood mouse and stalked off to join them.

"So," Sweetpaw began, "there is a Gathering coming, tomorrow, I think"
Batpaw bit her mouse, listening.

Sweetpaw continued, plucking the feathers off of the blackbird she

got. "Who do you think Acornstar is going to pick?"

"Most likely Pumpkinpaw, Hawkpaw and Crowpaw." Frogpaw replied, biting his rabbit.

Crowpaw... The mention of his name made her shiver. "Why not Batpaw?" asked Sweetpaw. "Because of her.." Frogpaw begun but he trailed off, in fear of being rude.

"Yeah." Batpaw croaked. Ambermoon, Emberstrike, Hawkpaw, Featherdust and Lightheart all came up to them.

"We are going to be doing battle training," explained Featherdust, glancing at Sweetpaw.

"And you'll be in pairs." Emberstrike finished. "Sweetpaw with Hawkpaw and Batpaw with Frogpaw."

Batpaw knew quite a lot about fighting, for only one moon of training, but she was approaching her second, then, only four more, if she passed the assessment!

With all the training she knew, she also knew Frogpaw would try to overpower her, as he was stronger than her.

"Okay!" exclaimed Batpaw, excitedly. She finally got to do something other than hunting! Batpaw, Sweetpaw and Frogpaw all finished their prey quickly and started to pad towards the thorn entrance.

They climbed the ravine and followed the stream to the Sandy Hollow. "Now Sweetpaw and Frogpaw, you're both stronger than them, so take it easy." said Lightheart.

They all spread out, Frogpaw headed towards Batpaw. "We are now going to assess your strength and skill in battle. Fight with whatever moves you know, and keep your claws *sheathed.* If I see blood, you're going to be punished." Featherdust explained.

"Okay." they all responded. Frogpaw pounced onto Batpaw but she dodged under him, raking his belly with a sheathed paw and he landed clumsily on the ground. She quickly spun around and

pounced on him, holding his head to the ground.

"Very good Batpaw!" exclaimed Ambermoon. But her words distracted Batpaw and Frogpaw heaved upward, causing Batpaw to lose her balance and tumble over.

Then Frogpaw pounced on her and held her firmly to the ground, she couldnt move. "Mousedung!" Batpaw exclaimed.

"Ha! I win!" Frogpaw lifted a paw to pick something out of his claws but Batpaw used that to her advantage. She heaved further up and knocked him off of her, swiping at him visciously with sheathed paws.

"Note this," she boasted "it's not a game and never ever leave your opponent for anything!"

Frogpaw just rolled his eyes and shook out his pelt. Lightheart and Featherdust came over. "You both did really well!" complimented Lightheart.

"Thank you!" they both exclamed. "Keep practicing while we wait for Sweetpaw and Hawkpaw to finish." Lightheart said as she and Featherdust padded away.

Frogpaw dropped into a battle crouch. "Wait!" Batpaw exclaimed, "do you hear that?" she asked, she heard a few small mewls from the bush.

"Whatever it is, I definitely can't hear it over Sweetpaw being anialated by Hawkpaw!" Frogpaw snorted.

"Shh!!" Batpaw spat at him. "Look! Over there!" she spotted four small shapes just on the other side of the thorn wall around the Sandy Hollow.

"Batpaw, its probably just prey, leave it alone!" Frogpaw scuffed his paws. "Are you scent-deaf?" retorted Batpaw, "that's not prey, those are *kit*s!"

Chapter Eight

"Kits?!" Frogpaw exclaimed. "In the forest?" he looked utterly shocked.

"Clearly!" Batpaw replied, *was Frogpaw an idiot?* Featherdust, Emberstrike, Lightheart, Hawkpaw and Sweetpaw all came over.

"Why weren't you two practicing?" asked Emberstrike sternly. "Sorry, Emberstrike, but there are kits over there!" Batpaw mewed quietly.

"Kits?" Emberstrike looked cautiously through the bramble-thorn wall. "They are kits, they don't smell of any Clan I know."

"We need to help them!" Batpaw exclaimed, worrying deeply about the kits. "They're going to starve!" instinctivly, Batpaw raced for the thorn entrance, trying to find the kits.

She caught their scent quickly, beneath the dense undergrowth. Soon she found the four bundles of fur. They looked as if they could be apprentices.

"Ahh! Mean forest cat!!" squeaked the smallest kit. "Don't worry! I'll save you!" growled the biggest one, he was only a little bit smaller than Batpaw.

"Hey! I'm not going to hurt you kits, where are you from?" Batpaw sniffed at each kit. Two toms and two she-cats.

"Our mama abandoned us near the fence far from here." explained the largest tom. "Yeah, we came all the way from there." agreed the smallest kit.

They were probably talking about Tallpines. *What kind of mother abandons her kits?!* "Are you guys hungry?" Batpaw asked, seeing the hunger in their eyes.

"Y-yes but our mama said that she'd be back.." squeaked the biggest

she-kit.

"Listen, some of my other cat friends are going to come, I think we should take you back with us to our Clan." Batpaw said.

"Alright, I guess that would be okay.. but what if our mama comes back?" asked the biggest tom. "I'm not sure, but you kits need food." she rested her soft gaze on the kits.

There was a rustle in the grass, *oh, the rest of the cats.* Emberstrike, Ambermoon, Lightheart and Featherdust padded out of the long grass.

"Oh my StarClan! There *are* kits!" Lightheart exclaimed. "Wh-who are you?" asked the biggest tom, sheltering the rest of the kits.

"I am Lightheart, the big ginger tom behind me is Emberstrike, the smaller she-cat is Featherdust, and that she-cat," she flicked her tail towards Batpaw, "is Batpaw" she finished.

The tom widened his eyes, "what strange names you have!" he gasped in astonishment.

"They're Clan names," Batpaw said. "If you're a kit, you'd have 'kit' at the end of your name, like Batkit" she explained.

"You'd be Russetkit!" The smallest tom flicked his tail to the biggest tom. "I guess so.." the biggest tom replied.

"What are your names?" asked Featherdust. "I'm Russet," said the biggest tom, he flicked his tail towards the smallest tom, "that's Toby," then Russet flicked his tail towards the biggest she-kit, "that's Missy, and the runt is Luna"

"What weird names." Emberstrike concluded. "We need to take them back to camp, they're half starved!"

Featherdust, Lightheart and Emberstrike all nodded and picked up a kit.

Batpaw took the smallest kit, Luna. She didn't squirm as much, she could tell she was starving.

They headed back along the grass heading for the ravine where they went down and into the thorn tunnel.

Once they arrived into camp, Featherdust flicked her tail for them to follow her to Acornstar's den.

They went behind the lichen that led to his den. "Oh my! Kits?" Acornstar exclaimed.

"P-Please dont eat us!" squeaked Luna. "I wont *eat* you, I'd never. I'm Acornstar, leader of ThunderClan."

All four of them put down the kits. "ThunderClan?" asked Toby, puzzled. "Yes, the camp you're in, and the territory you were in belongs to ThunderClan." said Acornstar.

Batpaw had a sudden realization, she wasn't anxious! *Yes!!!*

"We're sorry! We didn't mean to trespass!" exclaimed Missy. "Nonsense, you're kits, you didnt know any better," Acornstar looked warmly at them.

"Featherdust, get them a piece of prey" Acornstar instructed. "Where are Sweetpaw, Hawkpaw and Frogpaw?" he asked.

"We sent them hunting" replied Lightheart. "Good. Go make these kits a nest next to Swiftbreeze." Lightheart nodded.

"How long will we be here 'cause our mama said she would be back soon." asked Russet.

"For the night, I'll send cats to look for your mother in the morning-" Acornstar was interrupted by Luna's cry, "what if she's not there!"

"If she isn't there, then you have to stay with us because you wouldn't survive leaf-bare in the forest alone." he concluded.

"But-" Luna tried to reply but Batpaw cut her off. "Kits, let's go find Featherdust with that prey."

They all nodded, sadly. "How old are you?" Batpaw asked curiously.

"We're 'bout three moons." replied Toby.

"Okay, come, I'll show you where the nursery is." The four kits bounded of with Batpaw to the nursery.

Lightheart was inside with a piece of prey and a nest right next to Swiftbreeze and her kits.

"Oh they're precious!" Swiftbreeze exclaimed. "They can sleep in my nest, I might have to expand it, but there's room." Lightheart pushed the moss to join it with Swiftbreeze's nest.

"They don't need that," Swiftbreeze said, spotting the rabbit Lightheart brought. "I have plenty of milk they can have."

Swiftbreeze opened her tail to reveal her two suckling kits. "Come here young ones." The kits reluctantly came up to Swiftbreeze and they settled down next to her.

"My name is Swiftbreeze," she introduced herself, "and my two kits over there are Oakkit and Moonkit.." Batpaw left them to talk.

She climbed out of the nursery, heading up to Ambermoon, "Is there anything you want me to do?" Batpaw asked, sundown wouldn't be for a while, and she wanted to keep busy.

"Hm, you could go hunting with Crowpaw." Ambermoon replied, unfocused.

What?! No! "U-Uh but I'd prefer to go alone!" Batpaw really didn't want to speak with Crowpaw at all.

"Why?" asked Ambermoon curiously. "Because, um.." Batpaw struggled to find a response.

"You're going hunting with Crowpaw, end of story." Ambermoon concluded.

"I'd rather search the elders for ticks!" Batpaw muttered under her breath, walking away.

Batpaw tried to find Crowpaw. *The sooner I find him, the sooner I can*

get this over with.

Soon, not far from the warrior's den, sat Crowpaw and his mentor, Shadowheart.

Wonderful. Now I have to deal with my father and Crowpaw!

She padded up slowly. "H-hey Crowpaw. Ambermoon says we have to go hunting."

Shadowheart groaned. "Those new warriors seem to always think they control everything, don't they?"

Batpaw looked at her paws. "Let's go then." Crowpaw said as they padded out of camp and up the ravine. Batpaw's paws begun to itch. *I don't want to hunt with him.*

"I'm hunting near Sunningrocks." Batpaw announced finally. "You hunt somewhere else."

Crowpaw just nodded. Before Batpaw could race off into the bushes, Crowpaw stopped her. "Let's make it a competition, first to collect the most prey by sundown wins."

"But it's leaf-bare!" Batpaw exclaimed. "Exactly, making it a challenge." Crowpaw pointed out. "Fine." she replied, whisking off into the bushes.

Chapter Nine

Batpaw was racing hard through the short grass and over the slopes down to Sunningrocks.

Once she got there, she opened her mouth to let the scents of the forest overcome her.

Among the rocks Batpaw smelt a small wood mouse. She checked her wind and dropped into a hunting crouch.

Then she leaped, flying through the air to pounce on the mouse and kill it before it could make a sound. *Well that's one, I wonder how much prey Crowpaw has caught.*

Batpaw scraped dirt over her prey and continued on. She managed to catch a rabbit before she stopped by the river to take a break.

She went down to the banks to lap at the almost frozen water when she saw a small silver fish dart around the water.

Desperate, Batpaw tried to push her unsheathed claws into the fish but it slipped out of her claws and swam away.

I can't believe I just did that! That's stealing prey! Batpaw ran back up to the stones and tried to smell for prey but nothing was there.

Then, out of no where, a huge gray cloud appeared and it started to rain really quickly.

"Mousedung!" Batpaw exclaimed, finding her rabbit and shrew and she raced through the forest and down to the ravine and into camp.

Batpaw rushed to put her prey on the pile, her Clanmates were heading for their dens.

She saw Cherryfur just sitting there, looking thoughtfully at the sky as if there were prey up there.

"That was such a sudden downpour!" Batpaw jumped at the voice of Sweetpaw, who was nosing Batpaw towards the apprentice's den.

"Come on! We're going to *soak* out here!" Sweetpaw and Batpaw both hurried into the den.

"Finally!" exclaimed Frogpaw, "you guys are as slow as snails!" Sweetpaw rolled her eyes "when this all clears up, I bet I could beat you in a race!"

"Well you know what they say, slow and steady wins the race." Frogpaw huffed.

Batpaw wasnt paying much attention, and she looked back outside, the rain was still down pouring over Cherryfur.

Batpaw climbed back outside, "Cherryfur? You're going to catch a cold!" exclaimed Batpaw.

Cherryfur didn't reply until a moment later "it's a sign.." she muttered. "A sign? An omen?" Batpaw had to raise her voice over the rain.

"There will be a downpour, a downpour of many mixed emotions! This isn't good, this isn't good..." Cherryfur murmured, she ran off to her den.

Batpaw quickly darted off to the apprentices den. "Hey! Watch it! You're all wet!" exclaimed Hawkpaw.

"Sorry!" Batpaw mewed apologetically. "Batpaw, why did you have to switch nests with me?" asked Frogpaw.

Batpaw looked around nervously. "Because um.."she struggled to find an answer. *I don't want them to judge me.*

"I don't feel comfortable answering that." Batpaw said, sliding into her nest. "Fine then." Frogpaw said.

"I hope this clears up!" Said Sweetpaw. "There's a Gathering tonight!"

"Yeah" Hawkpaw agreed. Batpaw just left them to gossip and drifted off to sleep.

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Batpaw woke up to a paw prodding her side. "Wha-?" she grumbled, it was Hawkpaw. "Acornstar wants every cat up so he can chose who goes to the Gathering."

Batpaw climbed out of her nest and shook her pelt. Exiting the den, she looked up, the rain had finally cleared and there were dots of clouds in the sky, moonhigh would be soon.

Acornstar was standing on the Highrock as the Clan piled together to hear what he had to say.

"Those who will be going to the Gathering are," Acornstar announced after everyone had settled down. "Rivertail, Cherryfur, Stoneskip, Mallowheart, Shadowheart, Ambermoon and Emberstrike."

Those warriors all gathered together. "And for the apprentices, Crowpaw, Pumpkinpaw, Hawkpaw and Batpaw" She froze, *wha-me?!*

There were murmurs of surprise rippling through the Clan. Cherryfur looked up, but just nodded to Acornstar.

The apprentices went to gather with the warriors. Batpaw followed nervously.

"Brushfeather and Soarstep can come too." Acornstar announced, leaping down. The two elders came down to join them.

Acornstar padded over to the group. "We leave soon." he concluded. Batpaw looked around, she wasn't, surprisingly, as nervous as she thought she would be.

Batpaw looked up at the rising moon. She was born on a full moon, tonight she was eight moons old.

"Umm Acornstar!" Batpaw heard a little squeak from the nursery,

"when you sent the patrol, did you find our mama?" that was Russet. She felt so bad for the poor thing.

"I'm sorry, Russet, but I did find your mama but she said that she doesn't want you anymore.." Acornstar dipped his head to the kits.

Gasps ran all throughout the Clan. Swiftbreeze came out and wrapped her tail back around Russet and led him inside.

Acornstar came back over and flicked his tail. "Let's go now." he took the lead, pulling through the thorn entrance like it was nothing.

Batpaw followed trying to keep up with the rest of the Clan. She saw Hawkpaw and Crowpaw talking, so she went up with Pumpkinpaw.

"Hi," she said, matching her stride for stride as they climbed the ravine. "Hello, Batpaw" she responded.

Batpaw hopped over a twig. "So what's it like? Being a medicine cat apprentice?" She asked, Batpaw was generally curious.

"Well it's awesome! I get to help my Clan in the best way possible, I get to learn herb uses, and help birth kits!" she responded.

Thinking of kits, she felt bad for Russet, Toby, Missy and Luna. At least now, hopefully, ThunderClan has new warriors!

"That sounds great, Pumpkinpaw!" She felt happy for her. Then she turned her head to Cherryfur, who was looking really confused.

"Is Cherryfur okay?" Batpaw whispered, they turned towards the loud Thunderpath which they followed to Fourtrees.

"She's okay, but she did see a sign today, I believe it meant a future battle." explained Pumpkinpaw.

Batpaw nodded, then soon picked up the scents of RiverClan and WindClan. ShadowClan hadn't arrived yet.

They waited at the top of the slope that led down to Fourtrees until

Acornstar gave the signal to go down.

He flicked his tail and the whole Clan raced down and parted for him, Rivertail, Cherryfur and Pumpkinpaw to get through.

Rivertail went to sit with the deputies and medicine cats at the base of the Great Rock, Cherryfur and Pumpkinpaw did the same.

The Great Rock was *huge!* How did leaders ever get up there? Batpaw saw Fallowstar of WindClan, Shimmerstar of RiverClan and Acornstar, all talking on the Great Rock.

Batpaw caught ShadowClan scent on the breeze, they were coming down. Their leader, Ashstar padded out from the Clan with his deputy, Tigerfrost and medicine cat, Shadetail.

Ashstar leaped up onto the Great Rock and went to join the other leaders. "Hello," said a voice behind her, she jumped. "Great StarClan dont scare me like that!" Batpaw turned around to face the cat who had startled her.

"Hah, sorry, I'm Skypaw of RiverClan" the tom said, licking his paw.

"I'm Batpaw of ThunderClan." she said nervously. Batpaw could smell the fishy scent of RiverClan on his pelt.

"My mentor, Riverdawn, told me to go off and find some cats to talk to." he explained, Batpaw nodded.

"C-Cool.." she started to feel anxiety rise in her chest, *breathe, breathe..* Skypaw looked at her, "You okay?" his voice was sort of soothing..

"Y-Yeah.. I'm okay" she calmed herself down. Then a yowl sounded from the Great Rock, the Gathering was starting.

Chapter Ten

Once all four Clans calmed down, Fallowstar stepped up to speak. "Prey has been running better in WindClan, leaf-bare has shown it's face but we've come back stronger, no deaths from greencough this year."

Fallowstar paused. "I'd also like to announce that Wishheart's apprentice is now Dawnwing." cheers from all four Clans erupted as they called Dawnwing's name, she dipped her head.

Fallowstar nodded to Shimmerstar and she backed away. Shimmerstar stepped forward.

"I would like to announce that Mudstrike has had her kits and we welcome Crystalkit, Fernkit and Shallowkit into this world." The Clans cheered their names. Batpaw felt happy that the Clans were all doing well.

"Prey has been good, the bitterness of leaf-bare usually doesn't affect RiverClan and the prey that runs in our river, we've had it easy this leaf-bare." Shimmerstar announced, nodding to Acornstar and backing away.

Acornstar stepped forward. "Prey's good in ThunderClan, Swiftbreeze has had her kits, Moonkit and Oakkit," he stopped to let the Clans cheer their names.

"New kits? That's always good news," Skypaw commented. "Yes, you should see how cute they are! They'll be a moon shortly." Batpaw replied.

"I'd also like to announce a new apprentice who didn't come to the last Gathering, her name is Batpaw." Acornstar announced.

All eyes fell on Batpaw, she licked her chest in embarrassment. "Batpaw! Batpaw!" Skypaw begun to cheer and the rest of the Clans joined in, she felt as happy as the day she was apprenticed, but

anxiety rose and her pelt felt hot as she noticed all eyes were on her.

"That is all." Acornstar nodded to Ashstar and sat down. Ashstar stood up. "ShadowClan is well, stronger than ever. We chased off a badger and it went towards Highstones." He flashed a look at Fallowstar.

"I'd like to announce that Meadowpaw, Stonepaw and Rabbitpaw have passed their warrior assessment," Ashstar went on. "And are now Meadowheart, Stoneheart and Rabbitfur."

"Meadowheart! Stoneheart! Rabbitfur!" all four Clans called names, she saw them stick up their heads proudly.

It was much too cold to stay for longer so Acornstar gave the signal to leave. "Come now, ThunderClan!" Acornstar and the rest of ThunderClan padded up the slope and down back into ThunderClan territory.

"Who was that tom you were talking to?" asked Crowpaw once they got back. "None of your business." Batpaw replied whisking away to the apprentices den.

She got in to see Frogpaw and Sweetpaw sleeping silently in their nests, she got in hers and started to wash.

Smoothening her ruffled fur, Hawkpaw came into the den and layed down in his nest.

A lot happened at the Gathering today, and I was *a little anxious, but I managed! Cherryfur didn't seem okay today either... I should ask about her tomorrow.*

Batpaw tried to sleep but she couldn't shake the thought of Skypaw. The RiverClan tom filled her mind as she drifted off to sleep.

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Batpaw jolted awake but when she opened her eyes she didn't see light peering through her den walls, all she saw was a shimmery forest with stars dancing around.

Then, a shimmery figure appeared from the shadows. "Hello. I am Lemontail"

"Lemontail!" exclaimed Batpaw. *Ambermoon, Emberstrike and Flamebreeze's father!*

"You know me?" Lemontail asked, confused. Batpaw replied, "Yes! You're my mentor's father, Ambermoon's!"

"It seems like I missed out on a lot.. she was only nine moons when I died.." Lemontail stared off into the distance.

"She misses you a lot, Emberstrike and Flamebreeze too." Lemontail looked down.

"Emberstrike is a mentor to my brother, Hawkpaw" Batpaw mentioned. She wondered why she was here. And where this was.

"What is this place? And why am I here?" she demanded. Lemontail simply told her to turn her head.

Batpaw looked up. She saw a bloodstained forest floor, her Clanmates fighting to defend themselves against the enemy.

Batpaw was frozen in place. She shivered as Lemontail continued speaking. "This is StarClan and I've brought you here to tell you that the enemy is coming, and you must be prepared."

"Enemy? Do you mean one of the other Clans?" Batpaw demanded but Lemontail faded away already.

She looked down, disappointed, then she opened her eyes and she was back in the comfortable apprentices den.

Batpaw stood up and stretched, she felt a breath on her tail, startled she turned around.

"Crowpaw! My StarClan you're close..." Crowpaw came closer and closer to her. "Yes.. and my wish is to come even closer.." Crowpaw muttered.

"Stop it Crowpaw!" Batpaw exclaimed, swiping him across the nose

with unsheathed claws.

Crowpaw jumped back in alarm, blood welled around his nose. Regret flashed for a moment in his eyes but turned quickly into anger.

"You stupid she-cat!" he exclaimed, Crowpaw raced out of the den, probably heading for Cherryfur's den.

That was so weird.. it was like he tried to... her thoughts trailed off as she heard the excited squeaks of Russet, Missy, Toby and Luna.

"We get our kit names!" squeaked Toby. Batpaw padded out and touched her nose to each kit. "I'm happy for you!" Batpaw exclaimed, Swiftbreeze padded out with Oakkit and Moonkit behind her.

"Acornstar will announce the meeting any moment now." Swiftbreeze wrapped her tail around her two kits and eyed the four carefully.

"Look at you four! You're all a mess!" Swiftbreeze rushed to them and started to smoothen their fur.

"Swiftbreeze! Stop!" Russet squirmed away from her, and so did Toby, Luna and Missy.

"Kits!" Swiftbreeze exclaimed, coming back to Oakkit and Moonkit. Acornstar called the Clan together.

Cats swarmed out of their dens and sat beneath Highrock and waited for Acornstar to speak.

Batpaw waited silently as the Clan calmed down. "We have new, young members of ThunderClan!" Acornstar announced proudly.

"Would Russet, Toby, Missy and Luna please step forward?" Acornstar flicked his tail.

The four kits padded up to him nervously and stared up, their eyes gleaming with excitement.

"Russet, from this day forward, you'll now be known as Rustedkit." Acornstar announced, Rustedkit puffed out his chest, his eyes beaming.

Acornstar moved his gaze to rest on Toby. "Toby, you will now be known as Whitekit" Toby unsheathed his claws in pride.

"Missy, you'll now be known as Willowkit" Willowkit waved her tail. "And lastly, Luna, you'll be now known as Duskkit." Acornstar finished. All four kits looked ecstatic to have new names and a way better life!

"Rustedkit! Whitekit! Willowkit! Duskkit!" the whole Clan cheered their names, nodding their heads and muttering words of encouragement to the newly named kits as they went off to go play.

The only cats who didn't cheer their names were Shadowheart and Crowpaw. The two sat silently, muttering to themselves. Batpaw overheard one of them saying "...not real Clan cats.." "...true blood kittypets.."

Batpaw rolled her eyes, they were only jealous. She went towards the fresh-kill pile to get her morning share.

Chapter Eleven

Batpaw walked along the Tallpines with Ambermoon, Goldenwing, Featherdust and Sweetpaw. They were on the evening patrol.

Batpaw was pretty exhausted already, Ambermoon took her on a hunting expedition after the ceremony and she managed to catch two rabbits, they put up quite a chase! She was ready to flop down and sleep for a moon.

They walked on towards Sunningrocks. She caught a familiar scent on the wind.. *RiverClan's here!*

The other cats seemed to have taken notice too, their fur stood on end, they all hid downwind from the small patrol. "Sweetpaw" Featherdust whispered.

"Yes, Featherdust?" Sweetpaw looked up. "Go and fetch some more cats and tell them to hide in this bush. If it comes to a fight, we'll be prepared."

Sweetpaw nodded and darted away. Featherdust, Goldenwing, Ambermoon and Batpaw padded down to confront the patrol.

"Shimmerstar." Featherdust tried to stay calm. "What are you and your warriors doing on ThunderClan territory?"

Shimmerstar snorted, "It's RiverClan's and always will be!" she flicked her tail, bringing two warriors to her side.

"Aspenheart, Jaywing, fetch more warriors.. this could lead to a fight." Shimmerstar sent her warriors off.

Ambermoon bared her teeth, Goldenwing snarled and Featherdust eyed Shimmerstar menacingly.

And out of the corner of Batpaw's eye, she saw multiple ThunderClan cats glare through the bush they were hiding in.

A couple minutes pass and soon multiple RiverClan cats were sliding out of the river, they shook their pelts and stood beside Simmerstar.

Then, Shimmerstar gave a silent signal and they leaped at the ThunderClan cats.

Batpaw was knocked over by a RiverClan apprentice, he was only a little bit bigger than her.

The tom had knocked her down and held her firmly to the ground. Batpaw instinctively raked at his belly with her hind legs.

The tom screeched in alarm and backed off, Batpaw pounced on him and landed perfectly on his shoulders, holding on tightly, he tried to throw her off.

Batpaw felt the heaviness in her paws as she tried to keep herself on him. Once the tom had basically given up, she raked at his back, giving him a couple last scratches to remember her by.

Batpaw let go of him and he bolted away into the river again. She looked around carefully, then noticed her mother was pinned down by a sleek she-cat.

"Goldenwing!" Batpaw exclaimed, rushing over to help her, she lashed at the she-cat, eyes full of hatred.

Then she noticed that her mother was laying unmoving on the ground.

"Goldenwing?" Batpaw rushed to her side and tried to lift her. "Goldenwing!" Batpaw wailed, suddenly, all the fighting around her stopped.

This wasn't supposed to happen! "Goldenwing no!" Goldenwing bore a deep scratch in her belly that was beyond repair.

Batpaw let out a wail as she dug her head into Goldenwing's fur, then after a moment, she raised her head, tears forming and stared deeply into the she-cat's eyes.

"You killed her." Batpaw muttered. "You killed her you foxheart!" She felt like she was going to fall.

"She was the only one who loved me!" Batpaw's words rung clearly throughout the battlefield.

"I-I..." the she-cat stammered. "Shut up you flea-brain!" Batpaw cursed. "Now tell me. What is your name..?"

The she-cat looked startled. "Shinewhisker" she replied. "Shinewhisker. I will never forget what you have done!" Batpaw wailed.

Featherdust padded up to Shimmerstar. "This battle has come to far." Featherdust looked darkly at Shimmerstar.

"RiverClan has a price to pay." Featherdust whisked away from Shimmerstar and up to Goldenwing, she signaled to Lightheart to help her carry her.

Batpaw walked in silence back to camp. She stared blankly at the ground, she didn't notice any of her battle wounds.

Goldenwing is gone.. Ambermoon came up and rested her tail on Batpaw's shoulder. "I'm so sorry, Batpaw."

Batpaw just shrugged her off and went with Lightheart and Featherdust to start a memorial for Goldenwing.

Swiftbreeze was already poking her head out of the nursery, when she saw, she let out a wail and darted over to Goldenwing.

"No!" Swiftbreeze buried her head into her fur. "You can't leave your kits.. you can't leave me!"

Sweetpaw, Frogpaw and Pumpkinpaw all walked up to sit next to Goldenwing.

Cherryfur came out from the medicine cat's den with some herbs in her jaws and she placed them around Goldenwing, they were eliminating the smell of death.

Then she saw Hawkpaw coming into camp with a patrol carrying prey. He instantly dropped his and raced to the crowd now forming around Goldenwing.

"Goldenwing!" Hawkpaw fell down to her and nosed her, tears forming in his eyes. "Please get up..."

"She's gone, Hawkpaw." said his mentor, Emberstrike.

"She can't be.." he replied solemnly.

Batpaw went to lay next to him. "She was one of the only cats who loved me, and I couldn't save her." Batpaw's voice cracked with grief.

"I'm so sorry." she muttered to no one.

It was almost moonhigh when Batpaw managed to sleep. The rest of those close to Goldenwing slept out here, Soarstep was beside her.

Soarstep was Goldenwing's father, everyone insisted that it was too cold for him to sit a vigil out here but Soarstep insisted he stay.

"I'd rather freeze to death than not sit a vigil for my kit," he had said, "this was a day I never ever wanted to see happen."

After a while, Batpaw finally drifted off to sleep. She still couldnt believe that her own mother was gone.

Chapter Twelve

It has been two moons since Goldenwing's death, Batpaw hasn't fully healed since. She was ten moons now, in two she'd be a warrior.

Sweetpaw and Frogpaw are twelve moons, they're a couple days away from their assessment, Pumpkinpaw and Crowpaw were eleven moons.

New-leaf would be over in a moon, then it'd be green-leaf, prey in ThunderClan was getting plentiful.

Batpaw was out hunting by Sunningrocks when she saw a shape swiftly move through the bushes.

She smelt a familiar scent that she remembered from the Gathering... *Skypaw!*

"I know it's you, Skypaw." Batpaw remarked, Skypaw stepped out of the bush.

"Hi Batpaw!" Skypaw came forward and touched his nose to her forehead.

"Why are you here?" Batpaw demanded.

"I don't know, I just felt like seeing an old friend." he responded, licking his paw.

"We saw each other at the Gathering almost a moon ago." Batpaw narrowed her eyes.

"Whatt?? Am I not allowed to cross into ThunderClan territory uninvited??" Skypaw crouched into a play-crouch.

"No! You're not allowed, or I'll shred your pelt and use it for kit bedding!" Batpaw playfully threatened.

Skypaw pounced on her and they rolled around for a few moments before Skypaw pinned her down.

"Foxdung, I give up!" Batpaw got up and shook her pelt. "Ha! I am the best warrior" Skypaw puffed out his chest.

"You're not even a warrior, furball" Batpaw cuffed his ear with a sheathed paw.

"Not *yet* but soon! In two moons!" Skypaw announced.

"I'm ten moons too, but almost eleven." Batpaw boasted. "I'll be a warrior before you!"

Skypaw rolled his eyes. "I should probably get back to camp, see ya Batpaw!"

Batpaw nodded. "Goodbye Skypaw!"

Batpaw went back to hunting, it was almost sundown. In two days there would be a Gathering, she hoped she'd go.

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Batpaw had caught three mice and a vole and headed back to camp. She climbed down the ravine and through the tightly woven bramble entrance.

She dropped her prey at the pile and went up to Ambermoon. "I'm done hunting," she said. "Want me to do anything else?"

Ambermoon looked at her in sympathy. "Search the elders for ticks and then change their bedding." Ambermoon replied.

Batpaw nodded and headed for the medicine cats den to get mousebile. "Cherryfur?" Batpaw called. Cherryfur came up from the back of the den.

"Yes, Batpaw?" Cherryfur asked. "I just came here for some mousebile," Batpaw responded.

"Oh, yes, Pumpkinpaw!" Pumpkinpaw came up from the storage

cleft. "Fetch me some moss." Cherryfur instructed.

"Yes Cherryfur!" Pumpkinpaw raced back to the cleft and returned with a pile of moss.

Cherryfur took the moss to the back of her den, then returned with some of it on the end of a stick.

"I've soaked the moss in bile, do not get any in your mouth or you'll never get rid of the taste." Cherryfur warned.

Batpaw nodded, took the stick, and headed away to the elders den. She walked in on them telling stories about Goldenwing.

Batpaw missed Goldenwing deeply, she thought about all the kind things she had done for her and how much she had loved her.

"Batpaw! We were just sharing stories of a time when your mother climbed the entire Sycamore just to get an old squirrel, she refused to let her Clan starve!" Brushfeather said.

"Ah, that was back when I was a warrior! I miss those days." Soarstep sighed.

"Sthounds niceth" Batpaw said through the stick in her mouth. Batpaw went around to Brushfeather first and placed the bile in the nest.

She looked through his fur, placing the bile on any ticks she found and they all fell off. She hooked them with her claw.

Batpaw did this until all the ticks were gone. She brought the bile over to Soarstep and begun to search his fur.

"There was this one time.." Soarstep begun, "when Goldenwing had just became an apprentice, Lemontail's kits were being born," Batpaw hooked a tick with her claw.

"Goldenwing demanded to see these kits," Soarstep continued, "and Cherryfur wouldn't let her, so she snuck in!"

Batpaw chuckled at the stories Soarstep told. She finished with the

bile and asked the elders to stand for a moment to allow her to collect their bedding.

"I need a stretch anyways," Soarstep mewed and him and Brushfeather went for a walk around camp.

Batpaw took the bile, stick and soiled bedding and brought it all outside and left it under a bush.

She went up to a tree that had soft moss growing on it. She took some, enough for both elders, and brought it down to the den and made it all nice for them.

Batpaw exited the den and saw that Soarstep and Brushfeather had their heads pressed together. Batpaw tilted her head and walked over to them.

"Your nests are ready," she looked at them, they looked back. "What?" asked Soarstep,

"I said your-" Batpaw begun to respond but Soarstep cut her off.

"I heard you. Why are you staring at us so weirdly?" he asked.

"No reason." replied Batpaw. She was really confused. Were they mates? Two toms?

"Are you guys mates?" she asked quietly, Soarstep remained calm. "Yes. Me and Brushfeather want to live out our days together in happiness. We don't have much longer anyway." Soarstep responded.

"I've come up with what to call this, two toms together" Brushfeather commented. "Gay"

Batpaw was shook, "doesn't gay mean happy?" she asked. "Yes, exactly, we're really happy together." Brushfeather responded.

Soarstep and Brushfeather got up, tails intertwined and walked back to the elders den. Sweetpaw and Frogpaw both came over, confused.

"Are they mates??" asked Frogpaw. He looked very surprised.

"Ask them" Batpaw responded and headed back for Ambermoon. She thought that it was strange, indeed, but she could accept it. It was her Clan, how could she not?

Chapter Thirteen

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join beneath Highrock for a Clan meeting." Acornstar leaped up onto Highrock.

Batpaw was already beneath the Highrock and she saw her Clan pour out of their dens and place themselves below Highrock.

The sun was setting and soon nightfall would be here. She knew exactly why Acornstar had called the meeting. Once everyone was settled, Acornstar spoke. "There is much to discuss, but first, two apprentices have reached their twelfth moon and are now ready to become warriors."

Batpaw looked at Sweetpaw and Frogpaw, happiness rising in her chest as they looked at eachother with excited glances.

"Would Sweetpaw and Frogpaw please step forward?" Acornstar beckoned them. Sweetpaw's and Frogpaw's parents, Stoneskip and Mallowheart, looked at eachother warmly and nudged their kits forward.

They both bounded up happily to meet Acornstar at the Highrock. Acornstar jumped down to meet each apprentice at eye-level.

He looked up. "I, Acornstar of ThunderClan call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these two apprentices as they become warriors."

Sweetpaw and Frogpaw looked up in overwhelming happiness as Acornstar went on. "Sweetpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect and defend this Clan, even at the cost of your own life?"

Sweetpaw looked directly into Acornstar's eyes and replied confidently, "I do."

"Then, by the honor of StarClan, I give you your warrior name."

Acornstar announced. "Sweetpaw, from this day forward you will now be known as Sweetwish. StarClan honors your kindness and compassion and welcomes you as a full warrior of ThunderClan."

Sweetwish dipped her head to Acornstar as he moved on to Frogpaw. "Frogpaw, do you promise to protect and defend this Clan even at the cost of your own life?" Frogpaw replied solemnly, "I do."

"Then by the honor of StarClan, I give you your warrior name, Frogpaw, from this day forward you will now be known as Frogleap. StarClan honors your bravery and honesty and welcomes you as a full warrior of ThunderClan." Acornstar finished.

"Frogleap! Sweetwish! Frogleap! Sweetwish!" the Clan shouted their new warrior names. Batpaw was so happy for them!

Acornstar jumped back onto the Highrock. "Before we settle down for the night, Brushfeather and Soarstep have something to announce."

"I don't got nothin' much" explained Soarstep. "Me an' Brushfeather are mates"

Ripples of shock fluttered through the camp. "Two toms? Mates?" demanded one warrior. "This is nonsense!" Gossiped another.

Acornstar let out a yowl to warn everyone to be quiet. "They are mates and there is *nothing* wrong with it." Acornstar concluded. "If anyone has a problem with it, they can speak to me."

Whispers flooded the clearing, whispers of acceptance and whispers of utter confusion. "There is a word for two toms as mates" Brushfeather yowled above the noisy Clan. "Gay" Brushfeather yowled. Acornstar dipped his head. "Thank you, Brushfeather. Meeting dismissed!" Acornstar jumped down and went straight to Sweetwish and Frogleap to talk to them about their vigil.

Rivertail beckoned Batpaw over to her. "Would you like to join Mallowheart, Emberstrike and Flamebreeze on an evening patrol?"

Batpaw nodded. "Sure" she replied, joining the patrol by the thorn entrance.

All four of them padded out and climbed the ravine. "Where are we patrolling?" Asked Batpaw. It was Emberstrike who responded. "We're patrolling the ShadowClan border." he grunted.

Batpaw nodded. They padded past the Sycamore and Snakerocks and they came up to the Thunderpath.

So far, no signs of ShadowClan on this side, they all renewed the markers. Batpaw thought and wondered what it would be like to be a warrior. She had dreamed of it ever since she was a kit.

They finished up and headed back to camp. Moonhigh was here, she was exhausted. As Batpaw paddes up to the thorn barrier, she saw Sweetwish and Frogleap upholding their silent vigil. Batpaw nodded to them, they dipped their heads.

They entered camp, Emberstrike went off to report to Acornstar and the rest of the patrol went back to their dens.

Batpaw darted quickly to her den. It would be her, Hawkpaw and Crowpaw alone for another moon, then Crowpaw would be out of here.

She felt really uncomfortable as Crowpaw was back sleeping next to her. She tried to sleep but Crowpaw kept getting closer and closer until Batpaw had enough.

She got up and raced out of the den crying. She looked around for Goldenwing then realized that she wasnt there to comfort her anymore.

She let out a wail and there was a rustle coming from the nursery. "Batpaw?" asked a voice which sounded like Swiftbreeze's.

Batpaw gave no hesitation and burst out to her crying and burying her head into her fur.

"Oh my! Batpaw what's wrong?" Swiftbreeze asked. Batpaw wanted to blurt everything out but she was too scared.

"I just.." she tried to speak but she was overwhelmed with tears.

"Come on, let's go for a walk." suggested Swiftbreeze. Batpaw held her head on Swiftbreeze's shoulder and Swiftbreeze placed her tail on Batpaw's shoulder.

"So, what's wrong?" Swiftbreeze asked once they settled down in a clearing just outside of camp, far enough away so Sweetwish and Frogleap couldn't hear.

"Well.. Crowpaw keeps trying to do something to me.." Batpaw started, Swiftbreeze's eyes widened. "He keeps coming way too close to me.. the weird behaviour started when I rejected him many moons ago.." Batpaw went on, tears still coming down.

"That's terrible! Oh Batpaw..." Swiftbreeze nuzzled her. "I'll always be here to talk you know? No cat should have to keep things like these to themselves.."

"Thank you, Swiftbreeze, and the kits.. I don't even care about that anymore." Batpaw let that go.

"But hang on, there is something you should know about Shadowheart.." Swiftbreeze looked down.

"Shadowheart did the same thing to me. That's how Oakkit and Moonkit were created." Swiftbreeze looked down.

Chapter Fourteen

Batpaw stared at her in shock. "I'm glad Crowpaw didn't do that to me! I'm not ready for kits!"

Swiftbreeze nodded. "Never let him do that to you." Swiftbreeze stared at her.

"I won't. But how do I stop him if he tries?" asked Batpaw, she was uncertain and definitely terrified of both Crowpaw and Shadowheart.

Swiftbreeze thought for a moment. "Scream for anyone, a warrior would help you no matter what, if that doesn't work, fight him" Swiftbreeze responded at last.

"Got it." Batpaw nodded. She was still upset. "I have a theory, Shadowheart is Crowpaw's mentor, maybe Shadowheart is encouraging Crowpaw to do these things?" suggested Batpaw.

Swiftbreeze looked thoughtful. "Maybe.." she commented after a while.

"Batpaw, we should get back to sleep now. You can sleep in my den if you'd like." Swiftbreeze got up and beckoned Batpaw to follow.

"Okay.." she was nervous. The both of them padded back into camp, the moon would be setting soon and dawn would come.

Batpaw and Swiftbreeze headed back down to the nursery. Rustedkit, Whitekit, Willowkit, Duskkit, Moonkit and Oakkit were all sleeping peacefully in the same nest. Swiftbreeze climbed into her nest and Batpaw slept close to Swiftbreeze too.

Rustedkit, Whitekit, Willowkit and Duskkit were to be apprenticed probably the same day when Batpaw became a warrior, and Oakkit and Moonkit were only two moons old.

Batpaw very soon drifted off to sleep.

***

"Crowflight! Crowflight! Crowflight! Crowflight!" One moon had passed and Batpaw was now twelve moons.

It was Crowflight's warrior ceremony, she was the only one who didn't call his name.

Batpaw looked around, Swiftbreeze didn't call his name either.

The meeting was over, the Clan had dispersed. Ambermoon came over to Batpaw.

"Now Batpaw, if you pass your assessment, you could become a warrior any day so you need to be prepared." Ambermoon said to her.

Batpaw noticed that Ambermoon's belly looked a little bigger than normal. "Have you been eating too much fresh-kill?" Batpaw teased.

Ambermoon lightly cuffed her ear. "Did you hear *anything* I said?" Ambermoon said, clearly ignoring her comment.

Batpaw rolled her eyes the had a jolt of realization. "Are you expecting kits?!" demanded Batpaw.

Now she was eager to know. Ambermoon looked startled on how fast she caught on. "Yes! Now shush!" replied Ambermoon.

"OH MY SWEET BABY STARCLAN!!" exclaimed Batpaw, the whole Clan looked up.

"Batpaw! Hush!" exclaimed Ambermoon, slapping her tail over Batpaw's mouth.

"Fine, but that's so exciting!!" Batpaw exclaimed.

"Do you want to be a warrior or not??" threatened Ambermoon.

"Alright!" Batpaw exclaimed. Looking mischievously at Ambermoon.

"How the assesment will work is you will first be tested on your

hunting skills, then we will partener up with Hawkpaw and Emberstrike to do tracking, teamwork and fighting skills. If you pass all of those, you get to be a warrior." Ambermoon explained.

They both exited camp and climbed the ravine. The green-leaf air warmed Batpaw as she stopped for a while to wait for Ambermoon to catch up.

"You can hunt around Sunningrocks, no where else." Ambermoon instructed.

Batpaw nodded enthusiastically and darted off in that direction. Almost instantly, she caught a scent of a woodmouse.

She dropped down, quickly checked her wind, and stalked the mouse. Wiggling her haunches, she leaped. Batpaw landed perfectly on the mouse and she bit it in the back of the neck.

She scraped dirt over it and continued on. Batpaw opened her mouth, there was a thrush sitting directly on the Sunningrocks.

She hopped over there and pounced onto it. It tried to fly away but Batpaw brought it down with a hook of her claw.

She scraped dirt over her thrush and went on. Usually there was prey in between the rocks of Sunningrocks, she looked but couldn't find anything.

Soon, she spotted a brown wood mouse and she quickly pounced on it and then scraped more dirt over it.

"Good job!" Ambermoon praised and her heart felt warm.

Chapter Fifteen

"And I'm off!" exclaimed Emberstrike. Hawkpaw and Batpaw finished their hunting assessment and were onto their tracking assessment.

They were both in charge of tracking down Emberstrike. Ambermoon was in charge of watching and assessing.

They gave some time for Emberstrike to hide. After a few minutes, Ambermoon gave the signal for them to go off.

Hawkpaw and Batpaw raced off in the direction that Emberstrike went. After a while, his scent split off, Hawkpaw nodded to Batpaw and they split directions.

Batpaw went left. She raced through the bushes, checking her scent every time.

Soon, Emberstrike's scent branched off again. She darted to where it was, after a while, she saw Emberstrike.

She crouched down, careful not to let him see her. A fox-length away, she saw Hawkpaw also stalking him.

Batpaw sprung out from her place and pretended to lash her claws at him.

Emberstrike darted the other way towards Hawkpaw. *Perfect.* Batpaw thought to herself. Hawkpaw jumped onto him and brought him to the ground.

Batpaw held his head. "Very good." Emberstrike praised. "You'll both make fine warriors." he puffed, standing up and brushing off his fur.

Ambermoon padded out of the bushes. "I saw all of that. That was really impressive you two." she said. Ambermoon was panting hard.

"Ready for the next assessment?" she breathed. Both apprentices nodded their heads enthusiastically.

"Alright, let's go to the Sandy Hollow." instructed Ambermoon. They all padded to the Sandy Hollow.

"Okay, you two are going to be showing me all of your battle skills that you've learned." said Emberstrike once they all got there.

"You're allowed to use your claws, if one is being too violent, screech stop and I'll break apart the fight." Emberstrike went on, giving each apprentice a stern look.

"Once we've seen all your skills demonstrated, the battle will end." Emberstrike finished.

Batpaw and Hawkpaw nodded and dropped into a battle crouch. "Three..two..one.. FIGHT!" Exclaimed Ambermoon.

Batpaw and Hawkpaw leaped at eachother. Hawkpaw brought her down to the ground with his powerful forepaws.

Batpaw raked at his belly and Hawkpaw got off of her. They circled each other and Hawkpaw tried to pounce again but as he was, Batpaw raced along him, raking her claws lightly through his belly.

Hawkpaw landed not to far away and Batpaw spun around and pounced on him but she was a little too slow and Hawkpaw was able to turn around to catch her and latch onto her with his claws.

They rolled around on the ground for a few moments, clawing and biting at each other, when Hawkpaw hit Batpaw hard against her head and it send her flying across the Sandy Hollow.

She got up very quickly, shaking sand from her fur and rammed into Hawkpaw, he tried to catch Batpaw with his claws but she dodged every move.

They wrestled for a while, spraying sand everywhere, when after a few heartbeats, Emberstrike stopped the battle.

"You both did very well!" exclaimed Ambermoon, padding over to

nuzzle them both.

"Thank you!" Batpaw struggled to keep herself up. With the battle wounds and the exhaustion from the other assessments, she didn't think she'd make it back!

Hawkpaw dipped his head. Batpaw went over to lick the spilling blood coming from his side.

***

They were both curled up in their nests. Tonight was the Gathering but both Hawkpaw and Batpaw were way too tired.

They both were very eager to know if they passed their assessment or not, but their mentors had to talk to the leader first.

They both had visited Cherryfur and Pumpkinseed. Pumpkinseed had earned her medicine cat name last half-moon.

Cherryfur and Pumpkinseed both treated them. Batpaw told them about the assessments. "I hope we pass!" she had exclaimed.

Batpaw noticed that Hawkpaw had fallen asleep. She sighed and drifted off into a deep slumber. Batpaw jolted awake to Ambermoon pawing her and Hawkpaw awake. "You're going to be warriors," she announced warmly. Batpaw sprung out of her nest and went to Hawkpaw to nose him out of his nest.

"Come on Hawkpaw! We're going to be warriors!" Batpaw exclaimed. "I'm up!" Hawkpaw grumbled and got up to stretch his legs.

They both padded past Ambermoon and out to the gathering Clan. Batpaw quickly tidied herself and when she was done she saw Rustedkit, Whitekit, Willowkit and Duskkit all sitting neatly with Swiftbreeze looking lovingly down at them.

Batpaw assumed they were becoming apprentices. Acornstar was already sitting patiently on the Highrock.

Batpaw settled down next to Hawkpaw. Shadowheart looked over

at her giving her a menacing glance.

Shadowheart was about to go over and say something to her when Ambermoon stepped in between them. Ambermoon glared at him and he snarled and padded away to sit by Crowflight.

"We have much to announce! But first, two apprentices have passed their warrior assessments." Acornstar announced.

Batpaw looked over to Hawkpaw. "Would Batpaw and Hawkpaw please step forward." Acornstar beckoned them.

Hawkpaw gave her a warm look, she returned it. They both padded forward.

Acornstar jumped down to face them both. "I, Acornstar of ThunderClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on these two apprentices as they become warriors."

Acornstar turned to Hawkpaw. "Hawkpaw, Batpaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and protect and defend this Clan even at the cost of your own life?" he asked.

Hawkpaw dipped his head. "I do." Batpaw also dipped her head. "I do, Acornstar." Acornstar shifted. "Then by the honor of StarClan, I give you your warrior names."

"Hawkpaw from this day forward you will now be known as Hawkflight, StarClan honors your courage and willingness and we welcome you as a full warrior of ThunderClan."

Acornstar looked warmly at Batpaw. "Batpaw, from this day forward, you will now be known as Bat-" Acornstar was cut off by Batpaw. "Sorry Acornstar, but I have something to say." Batpaw felt embarrassed at all the shocked gasps and murmurs.

Batpaw looked at Shadowheart. "My father and I have been through some pretty.. rough times." She looked down. "But I still love him. That's why I want my warrior name to be Batheart." Batpaw finished.

Acornstar nodded to her, not looking annoyed at all. "Then Batpaw,

from this day forward you will now be known as Batheart. StarClan honors your endurance and skill and welcome you as a full warrior."

The whole clearing was silent for a moment, she looked at Shadowheart, he gave her a very quick warm glance, then looked away.

"Batheart! Hawkflight! Batheart! Hawkflight!" she spotted Sweetwish and Frogleap calling their names, the whole Clan very quickly joined in.

I'm finally a warrior! Batheart! Yes!!

Chapter Sixteen

"Now," called Acornstar. "Later on, Hawkflight and Batheart will sit a silent vigil and guard us while we sleep." Acornstar finished.

"There is still more to announce!" exclaimed Acornstar as the Clan started to disperse, they all came back.

"Four kits have reached their sixth moon." Acornstar called, he then beckoned all four to the Highrock.

"Rustedkit, from this day forward, until your earn your warrior name, you will now be known as Rustedpaw, your mentor, Frogleap." Batheart saw Frogleap come up and touch noses with young Rustedpaw.

"White*paw* your mentor will be Sweetwish, Willow*paw* your mentor will be Stoneskip and Dusk*paw* your mentor will be Crowflight." Acornstar quickly announced, she noticed that he was looking rather... old? Tired?

Batheart quickly snapped out of her thinking and realized, Duskpaw is with Crowflight! No! But there was nothing Batheart could do. *I have to warn her!* She thought.

The three warriors padded up to their new apprentices and touched noses with them.

"Just before you all go, I'd like to announce that Ambermoon is expecting kits any day now." Mews of approval darted through the clearing.

"And letting you all know that I will be retiring and living my last life as an elder and taking back my warrior name, Acorntail." Shocked mews rippled through the clearing.

Batheart was shocked, Acorntail was a really good leader. *Rivertail would be great too,* she thought.

Rivertail hopped up onto Highrock. "I will be taking my journey to the Moonstone tomorrow night and will be taking Batheart and Hawkflight with me." She announced.

Batheart realized that she and Hawkflight havent been to the Moonstone yet as apprentices. *Must've been all the drama that stopped us.* She thought.

"That is all." announced Acorntail, leaping down and heading out to the forest, probably to get a nest.

Batheart went back to the apprentices den to get her and Hawkflight's nest. She collected it all and went to find a place in the warriors den.

It was pretty crowded but she put her nest near the back of the den and Hawkflight's a few tail-lengths away.

Batheart used her senses to tell which one was Ambermoon's and took it out for her.

She padded to the nursery and put it down and made it nice for Ambermoon. "Won't you play with us?" squeaked a small voice coming from the side of the den, it was Oakkit.

"Where is Swiftbreeze?" she asked, turning towards them. "She went for a walk with Ambermoon." replied Moonkit.

"Give me a moment," she nosed away the kits. Batheart picked up Rustpaw's, Whitepaw's, Willowpaw's and Duskpaw's old moss and brought it too the apprentices den for them and made it all nice for them.

Batheart went back to the kits. "What would you like to play?" she asked them.

"Give us a badger ride!" exclaimed Oakkit. "Please!" Moonkit cuffed Oakkit's ear.

"Of course! Climb on!" Batheart lowered down. They climbed on, Batheart winced at their tiny claws digging into her fur.

They all exited the den and Batheart hopped around and ran around with the kits on her back. She saw Swiftbreeze and Ambermoon come back through the thorn entrance. Swiftbreeze had a mouse in her jaws.

Batheart kept jumping around and the kits held on and squealed with excitement. Swiftbreeze dropped her mouse and came over to watch, her head on Ambermoon's shoulder.

Mates? She asked herself. *What about Ambermoon's mate? She had one.. right?*

Batheart stopped and let the two kits off her back and they scampered off to the nursery.

"Are you guys mates?" Batheart questioned. "Yeah, I guess." replied Swiftbreeze.

"But how are you expecting kits? Don't you have a mate?" Batheart turned to Ambermoon.

"I really don't know how I'm expecting, I guess StarClan gave me these kits." Ambermoon concluded. "Either way, Oakkit, Moonkit and my kits are going to be all mine and Swiftbreeze's."

Batheart nodded. "Okay, well congratulations then." Batheart finished.

They both dipped their heads. "Did you talk to Oakkit and Moonkit about it?" Batheart asked.

"Yep. They were really excited." Ambermoon drew a paw over her head. "I made you a nest in the nursery," Batheart explained.

"Old habits stay longer than old scents, eh?*" asked Ambermoon, chuckling. "I guess so!" laughed Batheart.

Ambermoon and Swiftbreeze both padded to the nursery. Batheart went up to Rivertail.

"Can I lead a patrol?" Batheart asked. She'd never led a patrol before but she'd have to learn one day.

"Sure. Patrol the Tallpines that lead to the ShadowClan border. Take whoever you want with you." Rivertail dipped her head.

Batheart nodded. "Thanks!" She padded off to the warriors den. Hawkflight, Featherdust and Lightheart were sitting there talking.

"Want to go on a patrol? I'm leading." she asked them. "Sure, we were just talking about Ambermoon's kits." replied Hawkflight, getting up.

Featherdust and Lightheart followed, they exited camp and climbed the ravine.

They raced up towards Tallpines and went along the twoleg path. Batheart set down a few markers and the rest of the patrol did the same.

They continued on, setting markers along the edge of the territory leading up to Snakerocks. Batheart hated Snakerocks, Ambermoon always warned her to stay away from the crevaces in the rocks.

They came up to the Thunderpath. Batheart sniffed around. *Nothing but the foresty ThunderClan scent.*. she thought, setting more markers.

"ShadowClan scent!" exclaimed Hawkflight. Featherdust, Lightheart and Batheart came over to smell a heavily marked bush just off from the Thunderpath.

"Set a heavy marker down to over-scent theirs. We'll report it back to Acorn- I mean Rivertail." Batheart messed up. She was used to having Acorntail as a leader.

Hawkflight nodded and they over-scent the ShadowClan markers. "Set a few more and we'll head back." Batheart instructed.

Batheart was exhausted for no reason. She was beat from her warrior assessment yesterday. It took the life out of her!

"We can leave now." said Lightheart, finishing her marker. Batheart nodded and they padded off. It was around the evening by the time they got back. Batheart went to her den and slept until Featherdust

woke her at sunset to stand her vigil.

She got up. The heat had been pretty bad today but it was cooling now, she went up to Hawkflight and they went out of camp to stand their vigil on opposite sides of the thorn barrier.

I can't believe this night is finally here... me and Hawkflight are warriors at last! Next step.. get an apprentice!

**Yellowfang quote!*

Allegiances

This is just an update to the Allegiances, there will be a few of these throughout the book. When you see these, make sure you read the chapter before or else you risk spoilers.

~•ThunderClan•~

Leader: Riverstar, a flowy gray-blue she-cat with sparkling blue eyes.

Deputy: Lightheart, a white she-cat with spots of brown.

Medicine Cat: Cherryfur, a pale ginger she-cat with a white tail and brown eyes. Apprentice: Pumpkinseed.

Warriors:

Stoneskip, a solid gray tom with green eyes. Apprentice: Willowpaw

Featherdust, a pale brown she-cat with specks of white.

Shadowheart, a black tom with a spitting attitude.

Emberstrike, a bold ginger tom with blue eyes.

Flamebreeze, a ginger tom with green eyes.

Mallowheart, a gray-brown she-cat.

Ashheart, a gray she-cat with powerful brown eyes.

Sweetwish, a white she-cat with ginger and brown splotches, she has one green eye and one brown eye. Apprentice: Whitepaw.

Frogleap, a fully brown tom with specks of black patterning his back. Apprentice: Rustedpaw.

Crowflight, a black tom with a really bad attitude. Apprentice:

Duskpaw.

Hawkflight, a golden-brown tom with green eyes.

Batheart, a brown-black she-cat with green eyes.

Apprentices:

Pumpkinseed, a pale ginger she-cat with brown eyes.

Whitepaw, a fully white tom with four black paws.

Rustedpaw, a dark ginger tom with dark green eyes.

Willowpaw, a gray-white she-cat with brown eyes.

Duskpaw, a dark gray she-cat with lavender eyes.

Queens:

Swiftbreeze, a white she-cat with blue eyes. Mate: Ambermoon. Kits: Oakkit brown tom. Moonkit gray she-kit.

Ambermoon, a dark ginger she-cat. Mate: Swiftbreeze. Kits: Tuftkit, sandy colored tom. Pinekit dark ginger tom. Cloudkit white she-kit.

Elders:

Brushfeather, a pale brown tabby tom.

Soarstep, an old, frail tom.

Acorntail, a very dark ginger tom, former ThunderClan leader.

~•WindClan•~

Leader: Fallowstar, a cream-colored she-cat with green eyes.

Deputy: Icestorm, a completely white tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Wishheart, a gray she-cat with lavander eyes. Apprentice: Dawnwing.

Warriors :

Graystone, a gray tom with blue eyes.

Flutterpelt, a pale ginger she-cat.

Quailheart, a gray she-cat with brown eyes.

Rabbittail, a swift cream-colored tom with sparkling brown eyes.

Harebreeze, a pale brown tom with blue eyes.

Cloudpelt, a white tom with blue eyes.

Heartwish, a dark brown tom with brown eyes.

Dandelionheart, a brown tom with brown eyes.

Melontail, pale brown tabby she-cat.

Hopewish, a dark brown she-cat with light speckles of brown.

Brambleheart, a pale brown she-cat with a bold attitude.

Apprentices:

Dawnwing, a cream she-cat with dark blue eyes.

Queens:

Elders:

Elderfawn, an old, brown she-cat.

~•RiverClan•~

Leader: Shimmerstar, a shiny gray she-cat.

Deputy: Lakeheart, a brown tom with blue eyes.

Medicine Cat: Seagulltail, a white tom with brown eyes.

Warriors:

Shellfur, a white she cat with a tinge of gray.

Riverdawn, a shiny gray-blue she-cat with brown eyes.

Willowhen, a light gray she-cat.

Quailfeather, a gray she-cat with spots of darker gray.

Aspenheart, a dark russet colored tom with a bold attitude.

Jaywing, a gray-blue tom with sparkling blue eyes.

Sunwhisker, a bright ginger tom with hints of white.

Volewhisker, a pale brown tom.

Sandheart, a pale ginger tom with brown eyes.

Earthroot, a full brown tom with green eyes.

Shinewhisker, a gray-blue she-cat.

Brightwhisker, a brown she-cat with white whiskers.

Smokefur, a gray tom with deep brown eyes.

Skywing, a full white tom with blue eyes.

Apprentices :

Queens:

Mudstrike, a brown she-cat with stripes of darker brown. Mate: Sunwhisker. Kits: Fernkit brown she cat. Shallowkit gray she kit. Crystalkit shimmery-white she-kit.

Elders:

~•ShadowClan•~

Leader: Ashstar, a gray tom with blue eyes.

Deputy: Tigerfrost, a brown tom.

Medicine Cat: Shadetail, a black tom with a dark great tail.

Warriors:

Toadstrike, a brown tom with a patch of white on his eye.

Leopardfrost, a pale yellow she-cat with blue eyes.

Rainwhisker, a blue-gray tom with brown eyes.

Rosewing, a pale ginger she-cat.

Brownwhisker, a brown tom with specks of black.

Stormheart, a gray tom with brown eyes.

Rabbitfur, a pale ginger she-cat with blue eyes.

Stoneheart, a gray tom with darker flecks of gray.

Meadowheart, a brown she-cat with black splotches

Apprentices:

Queens:

Fawnstep, a pale brown she-cat with blue eyes. Mate: Stormheart. Kits: Oceankit gray blue she-kit. Pinekit brown tom. Maplekit red-brown tom.

Elders:

Chapter Seventeen

Batheart thought the night would never end, she was so grateful when she saw Rivertail come through the thorn barrier. "Your vigil is over." she had said. Now Batheart was sleeping peacefully in the warriors den.

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Batheart was awoken by Sweetwish prodding her with her paw. "Wake up!" Sweetwish exclaimed.

Batheart rolled onto her back. "Why?" she said annoyingly.

"Ambermoon is giving birth!" exclaimed Sweetwish.

Batheart got up almost instantly, burst out of her nest and out of the den. She raced over to the nursery to see Cherryfur coming out of the nursery shaking her head.

"Wha-what's wrong..?" asked Batheart, worry clouded her mind. "I-it's Ambermoon.." Batheart left Cherryfur and burst into the nursery, she saw Ambermoon looking down at her two kits, then looked anxiously at her belly.

Cherryfur came rushing back in with some herbs in her jaws. "Eat these, they'll help your milk come." she instructed to Ambermoon, she lapped up the herbs.

"So what's happening with her?" Batheart asked. "She has one more kit left in her but it's breech." Cherryfur shook her head.

"Breech?" Batheart asked. "The kit is facing the wrong way." Cherryfur explained.

Batheart's eyes widened as Cherryfur went over to Ambermoon and reached for the kit and attempted to turn it around.

"Oh my StarClan that hurts!" Ambermoon exclaimed. "You can do it,

Ambermoon, you're stronger than you think." Cherryfur calmed her.

Batheart walked over to Ambermoon and rested her head on hers. "You can do this. I know you can." she whispered.

"Okay, Ambermoon, your kit is facing the right way now, all you need to do is push." Cherryfur explained carefully, Batheart felt so anxious for Ambermoon.

Batheart felt Ambermoon's pain as Ambermoon pushed out the final kit. It was a white she-kit. Cherryfur begun to lick the kit to warm it.

"Congratulations!" exclaimed Cherryfur, she gave Ambermoon a lick on the forehead. "You have two toms and a she-cat."

Batheart looked down at the small bundles of fur laying next to Ambermoon.

"Ambermoon are you alright?" exclaimed Swiftbreeze, bursting into the nursery, her kits trailing behind.

"I'm fine, Swiftbreeze," she breathed. "Look at our beautiful kits!" Ambermoon looked down at them.

Swiftbreeze touched her nose to each kit and layed next to Ambermoon and watched them suckle. Oakkit and Moonkit went up to see their new brothers and sister. "They're so cute!" Exclaimed Moonkit.

"I want to name that one Cloudkit." Moonkit flicked her tail at the small white she-kit.

"Okay." agreed Ambermoon. "How about that one Tuftkit?" asked Oakkit, he pointed to the small ruffled tom.

"Alright. Batheart do you want to name one?" asked Swiftbreeze. "Me? Would that be okay?" she asked, shocked that they'd let her name one of their kits.

"Of course," replied Ambermoon, looking down at the last unnamed kit.

"I'll name him Pinekit" Batheart said after waiting a few moments.

"Pinekit.. It has a ring to it." Ambermoon nodded to Batheart. "Thank you, Batheart. But I must rest now." Ambermoon dipped her head to her.

Batheart nodded and mewed a final congratulations to them and padded out of the den.

"Batheart!" Called Rivertail. She turned her head and ran over towards her.

"Yes?" Batheart asked once she had reached her. "You and Crowflight will patrol the RiverClan border." Rivertail explained.

Crowflight came up behind Rivertail and eyed Batheart curiously. *Great. I spend more time with that furball then I need.* But Batheart just sighed and flicked her tail for Crowflight to follow. She felt his breath on her tail as they walked out of camp.

Crowflight followed her all the way down to Sunningrocks. They sniffed everywhere and sent down markers.

Crowflight came very close to her and tackled her down to the ground, claws out. "You stupid she-cat, I am going to kill you!" he exclaimed, bending down to bite her neck.

"No!" exclaimed a familiar voice, then a white pelt slammed into Crowflight and the cat started to rip his pelt apart. The scent of RiverClan washed over her.

"Skypaw!" exclaimed Batheart, Skypaw rolled off of Crowflight, panting.

"It's Skywing now, Batpaw," Skywing explained. Batheart sent out a *mrrow* of laughter. "It's Batheart now too."

"You *know* this tom?" Crowflight stared at them, shocked. "From Gatherings." Batheart explained.

"Wait why does *she* have to explain anything to you?" Skywing narrowed his eyes. "You tried to *kill* her!"

"Shut up!" Crowflight angrily grunted. "You know nothing about me!" Skywing's glare turned harder. "I know you were trying to kill Batheart." he muttered.

"Give up already! You're done!" exclaimed Batheart.

"You haven't seen the last of me!" Crowflight turned away into the bushes.

They both watched him run away, Batheart let out a huff of relief. "Thank you, Skywing, if it weren't for you, I'd be crow-food!" Batheart exclaimed.

"It's no problem. Who was that tom?" Skywing asked. "I've seen him at Gatherings but I can't remember his name."

"That foxheart is Crowflight. He keeps trying to do something to me ever since I rejected him like millions of moons ago." Batheart explained, she felt comfortable with Skywing, she knew he'd keep her secret.

"That foxheart better not try anything," Skywing started, "or *he'll* be crow-food."

Batheart looked up at Skywing, his eyes were burning with hatred. She looked down at her paws.

"You'll be okay, Batheart, I promise." Skywing bent his head to touch his nose to hers. Batheart felt a little spark in her chest and it sent shivers down her spine.

Batheart knew it was wrong to be seeing a RiverClan tom every once in a while, but she didn't care.

"S-Skywing?" Asked Batheart. "Yes?" He responded, looking down at her. "I really should be getting back to my Clan." she nuzzled him and padded off.

"Bye, Batheart!" He called to her. She waved her tail in goodbye. Batheart started to pad back to camp. *I think I like him!* Happiness bubbled up inside her.

He makes me feel safe, with kind words and gestures... "Ow!" Batheart exclaimed. She had run herself into a tree! *Stupid furball!* She thought, and she padded on back to camp.

Chapter Eighteen

"Let's head out then." Rivertail beckoned Hawkflight and Batheart to follow her out of camp and up the ravine.

Batheart couldn't shake the taste of the traveling herbs. She had to eat them to stop hunger pangs.

Hawkflight, Rivertail, Batheart and Pumpkinseed were traveling to the Moonstone. Cherryfur had decided to stay behind because she insisted that she was much to old to travel that far.

They padded up to the Thunderpath and followed it all the way until they reached WindClan territory, they came up to the Thunderpath.

"Now, when I give the signal to run, you run straight across and do *not* stop, at any cause." explained Rivertail carefully.

Hawkflight and Batheart nodded and they waited as a loud monster passed them, the stinging stench filled Batheart's nose.

"And..now!" ordered Rivertail and all four of them crossed at the same time into the territory that lead up to the cave with the Moonstone.

They padded up to some flat rocks infront of a very large cave. "This is Mothermouth, the cave that leads down to the Moonstone." Rivertail told them, she walked up to one of the stones and laid down on it.

"The sun's only just setting, we leave for the Moonstone when the moon is almost in the middle of the sky." Rivertail flicked her tail.

"Come, sit." Rivertail beckoned Batheart, Hawkflight and Pumpkinseed to join her on the rock.

Batheart layed down next to Rivertail. She heard her stomach rumble. "Want me to hunt for you, Rivertail?" offered Batheart, she

was kind of hungry herself.

"No. A new leader mustn't eat anything prior to going to the Moonstone." Rivertail explained. "You may hunt though."

"Alright, I will." Batheart darted off into the bushes.

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It was now almost moonhigh, with full stomachs, except Rivertail. Batheart, Hawkflight, Pumpkinseed and Rivertail all went down into the cave.

"Stay close, follow my scent." Rivertail instructed. They followed eachother, nose to tail tip in single file, and went down into the claustrophobic cave.

Rivertail led, Pumpkinseed followed, then Batheart. Hawkflight brought up the rear. They walked down, then up, then down again and soon the tunnel widened into a larger cave.

"Its..its so dark.." commented Hawkflight, Batheart felt waves of nerve along with anxiety flow through him.

"Just wait, Hawkflight, any moment now the moon should light up the stone.." Rivertail calmed him, but her voice soon faded as a blinding light filled the cave and Batheart couldn't see for a moment.

Then, the blinding light went away and all she saw was a beautiful shining stone reflecting all sorts of beautiful lights.

Batheart stood there in amazement, gasping at the radiant stone. Rivertail padded up to the stone and laid down.

"Do not wake me, I must receive my name and lives and cannot be woken." she put her nose to the stone and drifted off to sleep.

Pumpkinseed did the same. "I must guide her in her lives." she mewed before falling asleep.

Batheart looked around, then at Hawkflight. "This is such a cool

experience!" she whispered.

"I know!" Hawkflight mewed back. Batheart settled down and flicked her tail for Hawkflight to do the same. Batheart started to clean his fur and he did the same.

After a few moments of doing so, Batheart looked over to see Pumpkinseed shaking and meowing "No.. no.."

"S-Should we wake her?" asked Hawkflight anxiously. "We can't, they have to dream." Batheart replied and also noticed that Rivertail was twitching hard every few moments and meowing small curses.

Was that what it was like earning your nine lives? Batheart wondered. Then, the light around the cave dimmed, then went away. The ceremony was over.

Riverstar woke up and slowly lifted her head. Batheart rushed over to help her up. "What was it like?" Batheart questioned as Riverstar found her footing.

"I can't tell you, Batheart, it's a sworn secrecy." Riverstar dipped her head to her.

Then Pumpkinseed woke up. "We have to get back to camp. *Now.*" Pumpkinseed rushed towards the cave entrance.

"Wait!" Riverstar halted Pumpkinseed with her tail. "What is going on?"

Pumpkinseed looked around anxiously, deciding whether or not to say in front of Batheart and Hawkflight.

"I received a prophecy: The flight of a crow, and a shadowy heart will bring forth terror and war towards Thunder." Pumpkinseed said to very anxiously.

Batheart thought about it for a moment then was hit by a shocking realization, Crowflight and Shadowheart!

"It's obviously Crowflight and Shadowheart!" Batheart blurted out. Riverstar looked at her. "It probably is... I hate to admit it, they're

good warriors.."

My StarClan, none of you know what's been going on with me! Batheart rolled her eyes.

"We must get back to camp, *now!*" Pumpkinseed headed for the entrance, Riverstar flicked her tail for them to follow.

They padded out of the narrow tunnel and into the large entrance and out of Mothermouth. The almost-dawn air was nice and cool, she knew it would very quickly warm up.

They rushed down towards WindClan territory and crossed the Thunderpath, then they went through WindClan and surprisingly met no patrols.

They simply followed the Thunderpath down to ThunderClan's camp. Once they got there, only a few cats were stirring, as it was dawn.

Pumpkinseed rushed to Cherryfur to tell her what happend, Hawkflight and Batheart just went to their dens, too tired to eat.

Batheart woke up suddenly, it was now the afternoon, she guessed. She looked over at Hawkflight. *Better not wake him.*

She padded out of the den and up to the fresh-kill pile. She chose a thrush and settled down to eat it, when Riverstar beckoned her with her tail.

"Yes?" Batheart asked through the thrush in her mouth. "Come and eat with me and Pumpkinseed." she mewed, obviously distracted.

"Okay." Batheart padded over to the Highrock and jumped into Riverstar's den.

She saw Pumpkinseed waiting anxiously with a small rabbit between her paws.

"You wanted me?" Asked Batheart, sitting down. "Yes. We wanted to know how Crowflight and Shadowheart could possibly bring terror to ThunderClan?"

Chapter Nineteen

"Well.. Shadowheart has always despised me as a kit.. and still does, you can even ask Ambermoon." Batheart explained. Riverstar's and Pumpkinseed's eyes widened.

"And Crowflight.. keeps trying to do something to me.. ever since I rejected him as a newly made apprentice.." Batheart continued, looking down at her paws.

"That all seems unlikely, you have a vivid imagination." Riverstar commented. "It's real! I promise!" Batheart pleaded.

"I just can't bring myself to believe that he would do such a thing. Stop imagining." Riverstar concluded.

"Go eat your thrush somewhere else." Riverstar flicked her tail to signal for both of them to leave.

Batheart ran out of the den with her thrush in her mouth, she headed for the nursery to see Swiftbreeze and Ambermoon sleeping.

Batheart sadly padded out into the forest, in hopes of finding Skywing. She went to Sunningrocks to see Skywing hunting in the river.

She came up behind him. "Hey, Skywing." Batheart said sadly, dropping her thrush.

"Hey Batheart, what's wrong?" he asked, looking down at her.

"No one believes me about Crowflight! And my father, Shadowheart!" Batheart exclaimed, burying her head into his fur.

"What about your father?" Skywing asked curiously. Batheart realized that she had never told him about Shadowheart.

"He never liked me as much as he liked my brother, Hawkflight. He favored him for some reason." Batheart broke down into tears.

"Hey! Calm down.. it's okay.." Skywing comforted her. "You'll be okay.." Skywing pushed his nose to hers.

"I don't want to be in ThunderClan anymore!" Batheart exclaimed. "Or any Clan!"

"Shh.. don't say that..." Skywing nuzzled her. "I.. I love you, Batheart"

Batheart looked up at him. "I love you too, Skywing.." Batheart stood there with him, drinking in his sweet scent.

"Pumpkinseed received a prophecy about Crowflight and Shadowheart, it said that they'd bring war and terror to ThunderClan.." Batheart explained.

"I promise that no one will hurt you again." Skywing said after a few moments.

Batheart finally felt safe. Here, with the cat she loved ever so dearly.

~THE END~

(A/N): I'm sorry this chapter was so short!